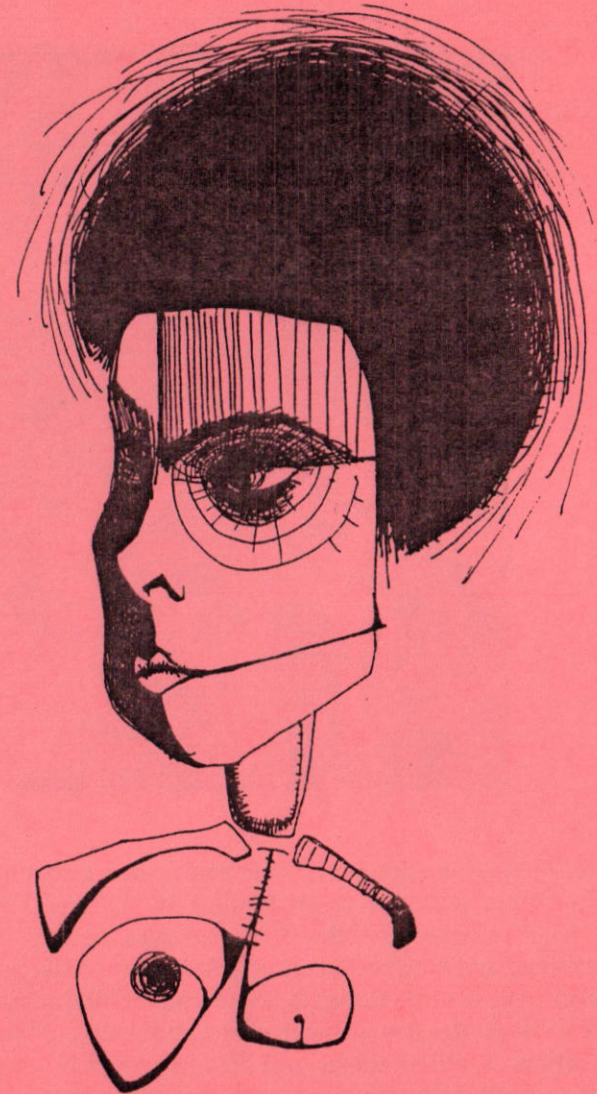
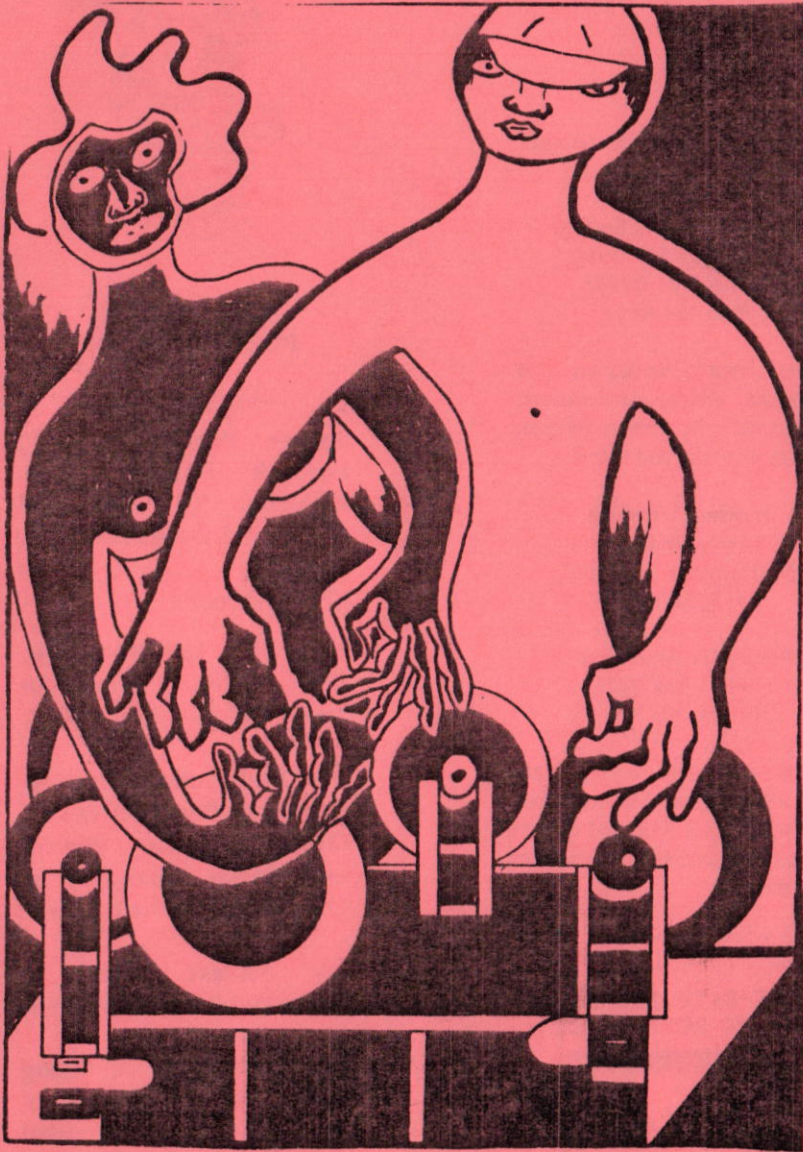


BLACK STAR NORTH #3



Revolutionary Anti-State and
Anti-Capitalist Perspectives

WHAT IS BLACK STAR NORTH?



The foundation upon which this zine rests is a commitment to welding theory with our practical understanding of the world in which we live. While one of us considers himself an anarchist the other of us eschews the label anarchist and likes to state that he is influenced largely by communism, surrealism, and insurrectionalist anarchism. Our endeavor is merely one attempt to assess the arrangement, effect, and reality of life under capitalism. Our experiences, observations, and dreams would be virtually meaningless without a direct reflection upon, and study of economics, as well as social theory. Thus we offer to you not the last word, but an expression of our always evolving ideas and everyday experience.

With this in mind we invite correspondence from others seeking a fullness of life unavailable amid the constraints of the present social structure.

NEW ENGLAND RESOURCES

Lucy Parsons Center
549 Columbus
Boston, MA 02118
(617) 267-6272

*anarchist bookstore and resource
center*

Institute for Social Ecology
1118 Maple Hill Road
Plainfield, VT 05667
(802) 454-8493

*classes and workshops in
sustainable design, permaculture,
and organic agriculture techniques,
and radical history and theory.*

Flywheel Infoshop
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Easthampton, ma 01027
(413) 527-9800

Victory Gardens Project
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Athens, ME 04912

*Radical gardening project works
with urban community organizers
to distribute free food and support
political prisoners. Volunteers
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**WORK RATE TOO FAST
(APPLY RESISTANCE)**



OTHER BSN PUBLICATIONS:

**\$1- "Fighting For A
Better World, Fighting
For A Peaceful Life,
Fighting To End All
Forms Of Oppression"** by
(anarchist prisoner) Ali
Khalid Abdullah.

**\$3- "The LA Rebellion:
Context of a Proletarian
Uprising"**, Aufheben Group.

**\$1- "End Modern Slavery:
Common Perspectives on
Ourselves, Our World,
and Social Change"**, by
Colombia Anarchist League.

**\$2- "Class War in
Barcelona"** by Gilles Dauve.

**\$5- "Living In A Dying
World"** by S.V. Cassette of
pissed-off and emotional
acoustic music from a
Portland anarchist. All
original recordings.

BLACK STAR NORTH
c/o Mutual Aid Portland
PO Box 7328
Portland, ME 04112

Alternative Press Review
c/o AAL Press
PO box 4710
Arlington, VA 22204-4710

Every issue contains reprints of articles
from alternative and small press
publications. Worth checking out if
only for the editorial column.

Green Anarchy
Black Clad Messenger
PO Box 11331
Eugene, OR 97440

A-News
PO Box 30557
Athens 10033
Greece

Newsletter chronicling resistance in
Greece.

The Northeastern Anarchist
Magazine of the Northeastern
Federation of AnarchoCommunists
PO Box 230685
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Local magazine with good coverage
of international news.

Midnight Notes
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www.midnightnotes.com

Publish a journal with an
Autonomist perspective.

OPM-SG (Brighton)
c/o 43 Gardner Street
Brighton
BN1 1UN, UK

Support group for the Free West
Papua Movement. Publish
newsletter with updates on the
movement.

Magnetic Fields
PO Box 50476
Minneapolis, MN 55405
www.magneticfields.org

Excellent Surrealist publication
entitled Blue Feathers.

Bad Days Will End
Merrymount Publications
PO Box 441597
Somerville, MA 02114
www.geocities.com/jkellstadt

Anti-State Communist journal. Last
issue contained interesting history
and analysis of anti-war struggles.

The Quilombo Project
PO Box 8306
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Project dedicated to developing new
anarchist theory and practice
among people of color.



WEBSITES

www.infoshop.org
gateway to anarchy on the web

www.ainfos.ca
international anarchist news

www.westpapua.net
website for the Free West Papua
Movement

www.infoshop.org/myep/love_in_dex.html

Anti-state communist writings by
Kevin Keating

BLACK STAR NORTH #3, FALL 2001

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All material written by Black Star North
Collective unless otherwise noted.

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c/o Mutual Aid Portland
PO Box 7328

Portland, ME 04112
www.angelfire.com/zine2/blackstarnorth
blackstarnorth@yahoo.com

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE HOLD?

Upon first hearing of the attacks on the World Trade Center, we were shocked and dismayed as were many around the world. Our first reaction was to get into the streets of our town, talk to people, analyze the unfolding events from a historical and economic perspective, and try to counter some of the racist patriotic hype promoted by the mass media. Since then, we've been researching the issue further, trying to understand the events themselves, as well as their potential consequences. So far we've been disappointed (but not terribly surprised) by the lack of good economic and historical analysis of the attack and its ramifications coming out of the North American anarchist movement.* It seems as though some of the best analysis thus far has come from authoritarian Leninist/Maoist groups. Many of these organizations have attempted to take advantage of the situation by pushing, in a manipulative way, their own statist agendas. For example, the International Action Center (affiliated with the Trotskyite Workers World Party) has formed a front group called Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (A.N.S.W.E.R.), which deceptively seeks to promote an authoritarian agenda among college student activists.

Meanwhile many liberal "anti-globalization" organizations seem to be avoiding the war issue altogether. Rainforest Action Network and The Ruckus Society, for example, withdrew from the September/October International Monetary Fund / World Bank protests in Washington D.C. before the IMF and WB even cancelled their meetings. This of course is no surprise coming from reformist groups who hold a stake in maintaining the present social order, and never had a genuinely radical critique of it to begin with.

For those of us, however, who desire more than what this social order offers to us, now is the most important time to articulate our ideas and refuse to water down our message. This is where a clear understanding of theory/economics and history becomes ever more obviously necessary. It is needed so that we can articulate a coherent analysis of the present situation as well as our ideas for anti-capitalist and anti-state alternatives. Such analysis and ideas must be discussed with those we encounter daily.

ZINES / JOURNALS

Do or Die
c/o Prior House
6 Tilbury Place
Brighton, East Sussex BN2 2GY,
UK
www.ecoaction.org

Aufheben Journal
c/o Brighton Unemployed Workers
Centre
4 Crestway Parade
The Crestway
Hollingdean
Brighton BN1 7BL, UK
http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoon/aut_html/auf1edit.htm

Insightful and often times accurate assessment of capitalism, its resistance, and their own involvement in such struggles. From an Anti-State Communist Marxist perspective with an incredible commitment to theoretical rigor.

Undercurrent
(same as above Aufheben address)
www.snpc.co.uk/undercurrent/direct.html

Anti-State Communism responsible for launching many of the debates (in the UK) surrounding the Anti-Globalization/Anti-Capitalist/Anarchist movement. Highly recommended for those involved in said respective movements.

Claustrophobia
PO Box 1721
Baltimore, MD 21203
www.charm.net/~clauastro

A newspaper with a great class analysis often sorely lacking in the Anarchist "scene." Highly recommended.



Venomous Butterfly Publications
Killing King Abacus
Willful Disobedience
41 Sutter Street
PMB 1661
San Francisco, CA 94104
www.geocities.com/kk_abacus

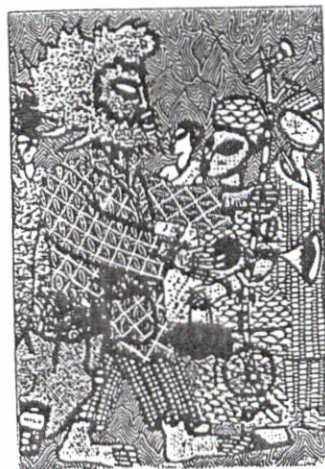
Killing King Abacus is an excellent insurrectionary anarchist journal with a penetrating and totalizing analysis. Also has information/news related to direct action. Willful Disobedience contains some of the most biting, lucid, and critical essays in the US anarchist subculture. Each issue also contains news about/analysis of global action.

Clamor
PO Box 1225
Bowling Green, OH 43402

Anarchy: A Journal
of Desire Armed
c/o CAL Press
PO Box 1446
Columbia, MO 65205-1446

Contains great analysis and a lively letters section. Also an alternative publishing company.

CONTACTS



AK Press
PO Box 40682
San Francisco, CA 94140
www.akpress.com

HUGE selection of books, pamphlets, and music pertaining to various relevant issues.

Autonomea
PO Box 568
Williamsburg Station
Brooklyn, NY 11211
www.autonomea.org

Publisher of radical books and literature.

South Chicago ABC Zine Distro
PO Box 721
Homewood, IL 60430

Distributes zines by and about to political prisoners.

Black and Red
PO Box 02374
Detroit, MI 48202

Publisher of many important radical pamphlets and books.

Antagonism Press
c/o BM Makhno
London WC1N 3XX, UK
www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/3909

Published "Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement" by Gilles Dauve and Francis Martin. They also have an informative web-site with links to other little known Anti-State, Communist-Anarchist groups / publications.



Our response to this crisis will play a significant part in determining the outcome of the immediate future. What will our future hold? Will we see the rise of new anti-war and revolutionary movements? Or will we see the rise of a repressive techno-police state wielding global dominance? Will we stand strong in uncompromising defiance until the end? Or will we remain quiet spectators as millions of lives are destroyed?

-Black Star North Collective, October 2001

*There are, of course, several notable exceptions. Contact us to obtain copies of statements written by Wolfi Landstrichter, Jason McQuinn, (Political Prisoner) Ali Khalid Abdullah, NEFAC, Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, CrimethInc Ex-Workers Collective, Phoenix Anarchist Collective, or *Against Sleep And Nightmare*. See BSN's statement elsewhere in this zine.



It is revolt, revolt alone that is the creator of light. And this light may acknowledge three roads: poetry, liberty, and love, which must inspire the same zeal and converge, to make it the very cup of eternal youth, upon the less exposed and the most illuminable point of the human heart.

-Andre Breton

PRISONER SUPPORT

Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid
Network
818 SW 3rd Ave
PMB #354
Portland, OR 97204

Anarchist Black Cross Philadelphia
4722 Baltimore Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19143

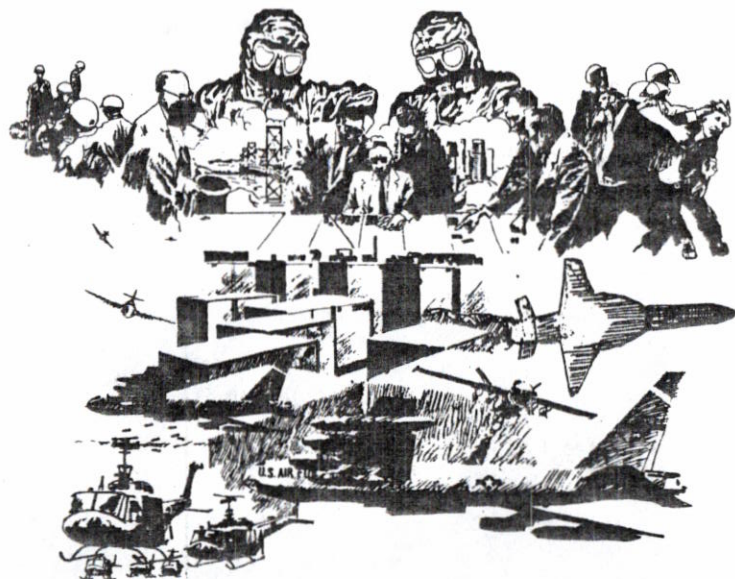
Political Prisoners of War Coalition
PO Box 554
Lincoln, MA 01773

DISTROS / PUBLISHERS

DMM Distro
PO Box 17838
Clearwater, FL 77762

DIY (Do-it-yourself) distro with an impressive selection of interesting and obscure titles on various subjects.

AGAINST ALL TERRORISM AND MEDIA LIES



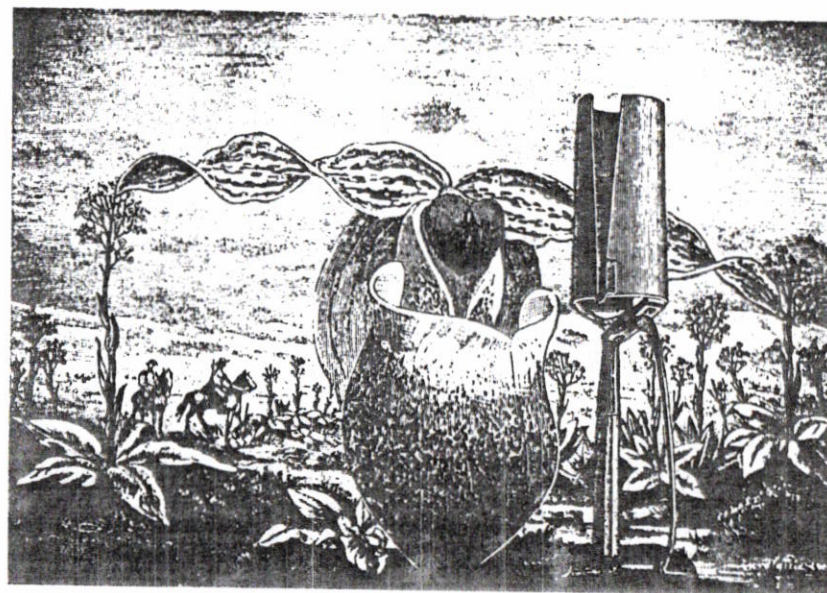
In the wake of the attack against the World Trade Center and the pentagon, the mass media has done a sickening job at stirring up paranoia, fear, nationalism, xenophobia, and racist anti-Middle Eastern sentiment. It should not have to be stated that these horrendous acts of terror perpetrated are a result of United States foreign policy across the globe. According to the media and the government, when the U.S. acts to thwart "aggressors", it is deemed as a necessary countermeasure to terrorism committed against the United States. The acts against the "aggressor" nations are, in accordance with the media and the state, justifiable defense.

The media acting hand in hand with the state, is dividing people along lines such as race and nation, all done with reference to the United States of America as the greatest nation on earth. The nation-state is a concept and myth invented by empires to divide working people and the poor. The nation-state is an institution capitalist society has invented to allow for the continued expropriation and plunder of unconquered lands, cultures, and people. Thus, nation-states acting in collusion with capital, fight against each other, and sometimes together when it serves a

THE FORECAST IS HOT!

Long live wildcat strikers, high school dropouts, draft-dodgers, deserters, delinquents, saboteurs, and all those soul brothers and sisters, wild-eyed dreamers, real and imaginary heroes of defiance and rebellion who choose to use and share their capabilities in the exquisite material transformation of the world according to desire! The lucidity of "alley apples" and broken bottles has replaced autumn leaves- the crushing subservience of authority scorched by molotov cocktails of fantastic destruction; and, far from finally, the expressionless caress has been deliciously transcended by the touch that stimulates to unheard of heights the sensuous pores of the only dynamism that matters. As liberated beings (which we are, for our quests cannot be stopped now), we are armed with the exhilarating knowledge that we are able to crush systematically all obstacles placed in the way of our desires and to build anew everything.

-Chicago Surrealist Group



We're all created equal. After that, baby, you're on your own.

Today everyone gets a chance to dominate somebody else. That's equality of opportunity. But to move and shake the destiny of the world—that belongs to only a few of us.

To succeed, you better start hustling now.

We start you out in the family, so right away you learn isolation, and that to disobey brings pain.

You may feel terror at your powerlessness. Use it to determine that you'll be the one who wilds power someday.

Chances are you'll lose a teen-age friend or two to suicide—some kids just can't adapt to the bleakness around them (just as emotional disorders seem to be claiming more and more adults).

You'll probably realize that your acquisitions don't make up for the sacrifices necessary to get them. But when you accept that life has to be confined ultimately to consumer choices, you'll be fine.

Mindful of your own superiority, you'll go on minding your superiors—that's the attitude of professionals.

As you grow older, you fully appreciate the absurdity of our power, and the contempt we feel for those who submit to it (a contempt only Sade has done full justice to).

Extraordinary cunning is required at the pinnacle of success. Using the specialists of reform and revolution to keep class struggles under control was easy one. But the deepening refusal to be represented by any kind of politician threatens as never before the reproduction of repression.

Quite simply, if you fail now, we're finished.

CAPITAL

We need you to succeed.



particular interest, for control of the world's resources. In this light, the United States government's imminent act of war declared against Middle Eastern nation-states is of no surprise. The U.S. wants to maintain its hegemony at whatever the cost to human life. Just as the act of those who attacked the twin trade towers is declared an act of terror, so too is the United States complicit in acts of terror, which have been and are aided, abetted, and committed across the globe. US/NATO military campaigns and the funding of armed forces in Columbia, East Timor, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Somalia, and Israel (occupied Palestine) serve as just a few examples.

The media has been deliberately invoking fear and paranoia towards people who are of Middle Eastern descent. The media, in an attempt to promote antagonism between races, fabricated the story that Palestinians were celebrating the attack against the twin trade towers. In reality, Palestinians were celebrating the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Palestinian city Jenin. The media uses any situation to its advantage in order to sell papers and to shape the ideas of the public. As you will notice the media, with its big bold headlines, flashy photographs and images, and sensational one-line slogans, is not concerned with spreading ideas or encouraging critical thought, but in creating mass compliance. This mass compliance is expressed in the flag-wavings across cities in the United States, a reliance on leaders for answers, and the inevitable U.S. civilian support of U.S./NATO "retaliation".

When community has been destroyed, individuals look towards the nation-state and leaders rather than trusting their own ideas to allow them to examine situations. In the absence of community people seek a *false* community through identification with nation-states, capitalist consumerism, and a generalized false sense of identity. This in turn, causes individuals to act in irrational ways. A hostility towards those who dare challenge a *false* identification with nation-states is frequently witnessed. Ideas contrary to those set forth are met with suspicion, fear, and hatred. A *reaction* rather than an expression of one's ideas is exhibited.

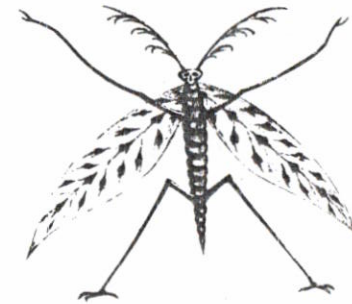
Terror enters the lives of the poor and the working class, in the U.S. and internationally, daily. To speak of one isolated day of terror is to ignore the gravity of the situation. Capital and the state are built upon terror. The military, work, police, the judicial system, and prisons are all manifestations of capital and the states' everyday reign of terror upon poor, working class, and otherwise excluded people.

The bond of the nation-state gives a sense of identity to those without community or deep connections with individuals. The nation-state creates the illusion that there is something to live for in our meaningless everyday lives of wage slavery, poverty, depression, and generalized terror. But the only true, and therefore genuine means of coming together is in defiance against *all* forms of nationalism and terror. Until we (the excluded of all nation-states) start living our lives for ourselves in revolt, we are doomed to be at the mercy of those, internationally and domestically, who profit off our toil, expendability, vulnerability, and depression.

Against all nation-states, capital, terrorism, and imperialism
For international revolution
Black Star North



Citizen or foreigner, innocent or guilty, undocumented or regularized: the distinctions of state codes do not pertain to us. Why would solidarity have to accept these social boundaries when the poor are continually tossed from one to the other. Our solidarity is not with the misery, but with the vigor with which men and women refuse to put up with it. -Some undesirables



nonviolent or otherwise, ever becomes a serious threat to the reigning order, the ruling class will not hesitate to use all of the violent military might at its disposal to restore its hegemony, as the ruling classes of various states have done repeatedly throughout history.

Sadly, the economic factors which enable the rich to control the world are often the same factors that give birth to the "nonviolent activist". Pacifist ideologies allow certain middle class individuals to safely protest perceived injustices while avoiding an actual analysis as to why those injustices exist in the first place. Analysis is replaced by a vague shunning of "violence". Forming a real social/economic analysis would of course force these people to confront the comfortable class privilege which capitalism allows them to enjoy. In the end, the "nonviolent activist actually helps to perpetuate violence, as he fails to critique or confront the inherently violent institutions of capital and the state.

Pacifism is flawed because it is based on an abstract condemnation of violence, which assumes that all violence is somehow bad or evil. This is quite different from an ethical opposition to violence, which would critique the ways in which a particular violent act or form of institutionalized violence negatively affects people in a given situation. The point here, however, is also not to glorify or place supremacy on "violent" tactics. Taking such a stance would make one as ridiculous as the dogmatic pacifists. The question is not "violence" or "nonviolence", but: what tactics are useful in our daily struggle to destroy the institutionalized violence of the state and capital? These tactics will vary depending upon the given situation and individuals involved, and should not be limited by the false moral dictates of pacifism or any other ideology.

thoughts on violence and pacifism...

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, an anti-war movement has emerged throughout the U.S. as well as internationally. In one way or another, the individuals involved in this movement stand opposed to a U.S./allied military campaign in Afghanistan (and possibly elsewhere) which will undoubtedly lead only to a further loss of innocent lives. The individuals who make up this movement are diverse and hold varying (and often conflicting) ideas as to how the war should be opposed, and as to what alternatives should be implemented. Included among this foray are the pacifists who (often with little or no actual social analysis of the situation) inadequately contend that, "violence only begets more violence".

The latest issue of "The Activist Update", (newsletter of the Southern Maine Peace and Justice Center) includes an article suggesting that the Bush administration establish a "Department of Peace to develop ways in which the United States can contribute to true world peace and stability. While we do not pretend that this silly statement speaks for the "peace" movement as a whole, it does reveal some of this movement's reformist tendencies. For even in it's most "radical" form, "nonviolent civil disobedience" is at best a mere appeal to those in power.

Pacifism calls on the rich and powerful to make the "morally correct" decision to cease the murderous state/corporate sponsored practices from which they personally benefit. Such reasoning, however, is not based on any analysis or understanding of capitalism, the state, or reality. The capitalist class will never voluntarily give up their wealth and prestige. If any movement,



DEFINING TERRORISM

As the American state calls the world to a "war against terrorism", it carefully avoids explaining what it means by terrorism. What need is there? We all can see that the acts carried out on September 11 were terrorist acts. The indiscriminate killing of the passengers on the flights and of the workers and visitors at the World Trade Center most of whom could not be implicated in the making or executing of U.S. foreign policy and the political motivation behind these actions combine to leave no question of their nature. But here we begin to develop a definition for terrorism. It could be described as the use of indiscriminate violence to achieve a political aim, generally through the spread of fear within a given population.

A brief look at the origin of the word could clarify things further. The word terrorism was first used to describe the policy put into practice by the newly formed republican state in France in 1793, also known as the Reign of Terror. The purpose of this policy was to eliminate all opposition to the new state through mass executions of everyone who might be considered a threat to the newly formed state, regardless of any proof or of the political or social positions of those killed. The aim was not so much to eliminate the old aristocrats (many of whom might easily be useful in the new regime, as to suppress the continuing revolution that was threatening to bring down the new regime. The justification for this terror was that the new state was the rule of the people and so enemies of the state were enemies of the people. Thus the first recognized terrorist activity was an act of indiscriminate violence institutionalized by a state that justified its actions on democratic and humanistic grounds for the purpose of suppressing opposition and revolt. For approximately the next hundred years, terrorism was recognized as a policy of certain states by which they used indiscriminate violence to establish and enforce their power. It was only in the late 1800's, when widespread

revolt began to express itself openly often in violent ways that the word came to be applied to revolutionary violence as well.

It is normal in the evolution of languages for the meanings of words to transform, but not to be turned on their heads. For this reason, terrorism can only be a meaningful term if it keeps some of its original characteristics. I would argue that terrorism is best understood as either the use of indiscriminate violence or the threat of indiscriminate violence in order to induce fear in a population with a political aim, or the use of the threat of violence by a state to enforce power over its own or another population.

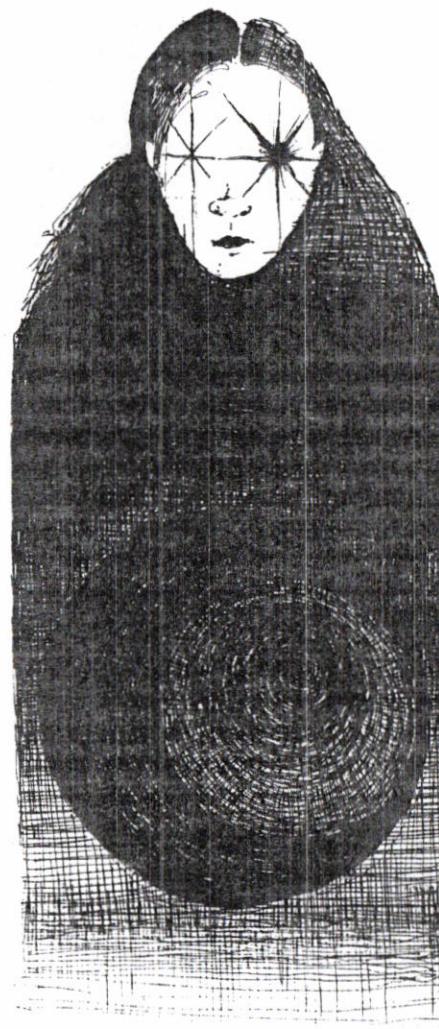


Bush's false choice

A basic part of this definition is that terrorism is always an act of power intended to induce fear. If we look at this definition it becomes obvious that at one time or another all states use terrorist methods. It is inherent to their functioning. Since the United States is currently the most powerful state on the planet, it is clearly implicated in terrorist activities throughout the globe. But the false choice in Bush's ultimatum to the world is more immediate than this. In calling for a "war on terrorism" rather than on a specific people or nations, Bush is calling the world to a war with a far more nebulous enemy than even the war on drugs. Such a war can only be carried out through a strategy of increasing the repressive power of the state. Because no state dares to define terrorism too precisely since all states would be implicated in such a definition, states will decide arbitrarily, based on their own needs, what constitutes terrorism, and we can be sure that this conception will be broadened to encompass any serious revolt. This war will be waged as strongly against the so-called "internal enemy" as any external enemies. This will definitely

We should not be in the least afraid of ruins. They may blast and lay bare to this world before they go but we carry a new world here in our hearts, and this world is growing as we speak.

- B. Durrutti



How could people suddenly abandon themselves to their sensuality, love, caresses, rhythm, to their lover, when their education and all their circumstances push them towards controlling themselves rather than letting themselves go, to seeing everything in terms of competition, power relationships and bluff? How could they when they come home in the evening knackered from work, when at the weekend they are hampered with the children, when they drag through the years with partners they no longer love? There are many unhappy people whose profound misery and overwork extinguish love.

- Dominique Karamazov
The Poverty of Feminism

(Elephant Editions / B.M. Elephant / London WC1N 3XX, UK)

REFORMIST SUPERSTITION AND FUCKING CRIMINALITY IN ARMORED DEMOCRACY!!!

We thought that the betrayal and the theory of the two opposite extremes formed a tragic and awful side of the past, but we were wrong. We have seen the game played by the Genoa Social Forum (GSF) using betrayal and disgraceful action against comrades. During the demonstration many comrades saw themselves left out of the lines and put under pressure on the one hand by gas that was shot at the level of peoples heads and on the other hand by lines of "comrades".

The "Black Block" is accused of being responsible for the failure of the theatrical protest organized by the GSF. But what is the Black Block? Does it really exist? We have seen proletarians who attacked private property. They also refused to be massacred by the cops.

Banks, cars, and temporary agencies have been burned, barricades were built, while at the same time the police beat, shot, and killed. The GSF has pressed for a peaceful demonstration up until the end, for civil disobedience, while the police stopped and beat comrades before the meeting in Genoa. In this way, the GSF has allowed the police to do what it wanted. It entered the camps, arrested comrades, and organized squads of policemen and in towns nearby during the night. The GSF speaks of non-violence while capital uses the same violence everyday against proletarians at work, and in neighborhoods. Taking all this we would have to put up our hands and suffer, leaving the martyrdom to the catholics. Did you pray when the cops entered the camps? People were surprised by the repression, by the police killing in the square, but don't you remember the LEGGE REALE (law that permits the police to carry and use guns)? A year ago they killed one hundred proletarian prisoners, but where were you? Did you talk about democratic prisons? When they killed a comrade, a boy, people discussed whether it was all right to burn cars. For us this is disgusting, comrades.

In Genoa things became clear. The pacifist protest of civil society and the meeting of the G8 was smeared. The political and democratic compromise, which was stroking and beating at the same time, was broken. Yesterday night the GSF had a taste of what thousands of proletarians endure everyday. The problem is how to react, how to refuse to behave like elephants in a glass house. The war capital has declared against humanity will be fought with every means necessary.

The cops are not the main problem for the proletarian movement, as we expressed at the demonstration in Genoa. Only from the point of view of "civil society"- which is only a slimy bourgeois entity. The problem of the proletariat movement is how to effectively attack capitalism, which cannot be reduced to a demonstration in Genoa. It is about revealing the communist passion within capitalist crisis.

Against the pacifist menace.

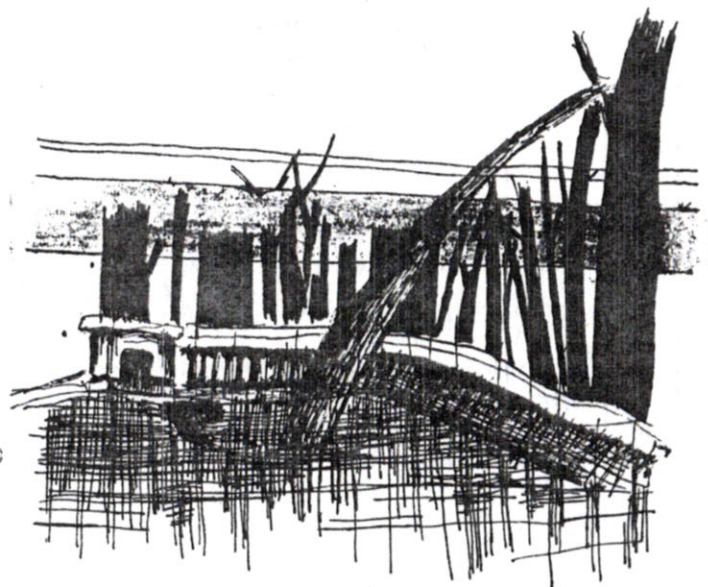
For communist revolution.

Precari Nati

mean increased police spying, harassment, searches, detentions, based solely on the fact that the state has decided one is a terrorist threat. In other words, the nebulous nature of a war on terrorism guarantees that it will increase the atmosphere of psychological terror which is the greatest weapon of every ruling class and every state against those they rule. The most disturbing aspect of this situation is that most people will accept this. We are always more frightened of the terror we don't know than of the one we face every day. So repressive state terror will most likely go forward with the democratic support of those who are ruled in the name of a war against terrorism.

But some of us have been fighting against terrorism for years. We have been doing so precisely by fighting against the ruling order and its police and military institutions that are the main source of terrorism world-wide. No state can lead a sincere battle against terrorism, because terrorism has been a strategy of states all along, a strategy to which every state will turn whenever it has need to do so. The only way to put an end to terrorism is to put an end to the state. And by this I mean every state in the world.

From *Neither Their War Nor Their Peace*, October 1, 2001
Copies available through Black Star North upon request.





BSN's introduction to "War and the Spectacle"

Here we reprint an essay on the Gulf War and its opposition, written from a Situationist perspective, by the Bureau of Public Secrets in April of 1991. We thought it was important to reprint it not only for people to discuss, but to apply to their own actions, as we find ourselves on the verge of yet another U.S. sponsored war.

An important distinction in this essay is that which is made between individuals and centralized, bureaucratic organizations. Recently, here in Portland, we and another comrade attended a meeting of a supposed "coalition" of individuals planning a march in opposition to a U.S. military response to the September 11 attacks. In actual practice, the meeting was a front for the Southern Maine Global Action Network (SMEGAN) and other reformist organizations, which sought to manipulate and control the march with their own predetermined agenda. At the meeting, the three of us found ourselves marginalized as we refused to consent to a proposal that a "spokesperson" for the "coalition" speak at the beginning of the rally and set an agenda that sought to limit the free expression of participants. Some of the individuals in attendance may have thought we had a relevant point, but perhaps due to inexperience, regarded it as a trivial concern. The principle was important to us, however, because through our knowledge of history and our own experiences, we understand the serious problems produced when democratic organizations (even if they are organized by "consensus") try to represent autonomous individuals. Whether it's the unions and leftist parties selling out the Spanish proletariat in the 1930's or white, middle-class, liberal, "non-violent" activists forcibly preventing black youth from looting corporate retail outlets during the Seattle anti-WTO protests in 1999; such organizations will always reveal their true authoritarian nature in times of revolt.

As an alternative to working with manipulative organizations, we can organize in coalitions with others who, while perhaps having different perspectives than our own, are willing to work together in opposition to the war. However, this should not stop us from attending the rallies and marches organized by the "official" organizations. We can still go to discuss our perspectives and pass out our literature, and if they won't let us speak on their microphones, we can stand on park benches and make our own speeches! And no self-appointed leaders or "spokespeople" are going to stop us!

BURNING AND LOOTING ALL ILLUSIONS TONIGHT...

If we are here, it is not as professional activists of anti-globalization, trying to find a position of mediation between the puppets of the economy and its 'victims', by acting on behalf of others (the "invisible", the revolted proletarians against the IMF or the World Bank, the refugees, the precarious workers.). We are not interested in representing anyone, and we spit in the face of those who wish to represent us. We do not understand exclusion as exclusion from the centers of economic decision-making but as the loss of our everyday life and activity as proletarians because of the economy.

If we are here, it is not because we prefer fair trade to free trade, it is not because we believe that globalisation weakens the authority of nation-states. We are not here because we think that the state is controlled by non-democratic institutions, nor because we want more control over the market. We are here because all trade is the trade of human misery, because all states are prisons, because democracy conceals the dictatorship of capital.

If we are here it is not because we see proletarians as victims, nor because we want to place ourselves as their protectors. We didn't come here to be impressed by spectacular riots but to learn the tactics of everyday class war by the strikers of Ansaldo and disobedient proletarians in the metal industry. We come here to exchange our own experiences as the dispossessed of the whole world.

If we are here, we do not come as members of the numerous NGO's, official lobbies, ATTAC or the rest of those who merely wish to be included in the discussions over the modernization of capitalism and who hope that their proposals (e.g. tobin tax) will be able to save capitalist social relations, i.e. the same relations which perpetuate our alienation and exploitation.

If we are here, it is as proletarians who recognise capitalism not in the meetings of the various gangsters but in the daily robbery of our lives in the factories, in the call centers, as unemployed, for the needs of the economy. We do not speak on behalf of anyone, we start from our own conditions. Capitalism does not exist because of the G8, the G8 exists because of capitalism. Capitalism is nothing but the expropriation of our activity, which turns against us as an alien force.

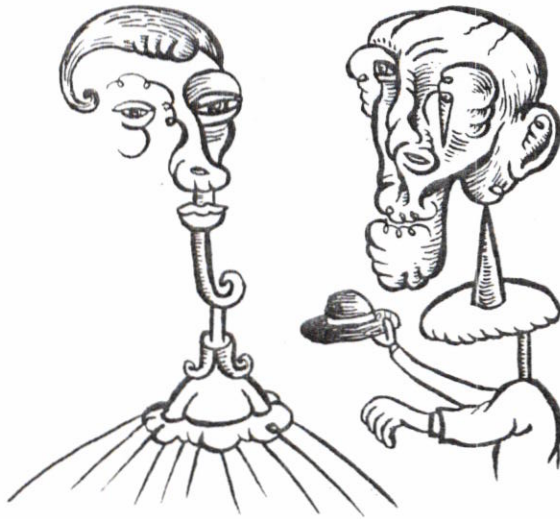
Our festival against capital does not have a beginning or an end, it is not a predetermined spectacle, it does not have a fixed date. Our future lies beyond all mediations, beyond nation-states, beyond all attempts to reform capitalism. Our future lies in the destruction of the economy.

**For the total abolition of the state and capital.
For the world human community.
Proletarians Against The Machine**



The 1991 Los Angeles riots went further than those of Watts in 1965. The succession of riots on estates shows a significant fraction of youth cannot be integrated. Here and there, in spite of mass unemployment, workers won't be blackmailed into accepting lower wages as barter against job creation. Koreans have proved the "World Company" spreads factory restlessness at the same time as profits, and "backward" Albania gave birth to a modern rising. When a sizable minority fed up with virtual reality starts making possibilities real, revolution will rise again, terrible and anonymous.

-Gilles Dauve



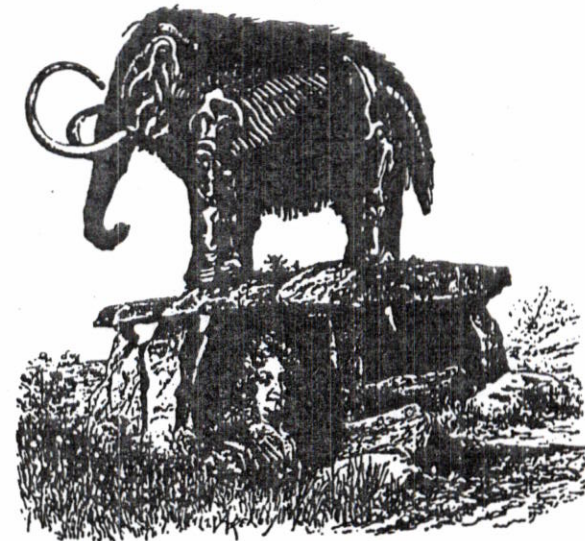
The following pieces were written by European comrades in regards to July's massive protests of the G8 in Genoa, Italy. These were met with massive police violence, repression and the murder of young anarchist Carlo Giuliani. While much has been written and discussed concerning these events we decided to reprint the following as they offer analyses relevant to our everyday struggles.

On July 22, 2001 13 comrades were stopped by militarized police outside their homes and brought to the central carabinieri station in Bologna for 7 hours. Two comrades were charged with possession of knives (Swiss-army type...). Over a thousand leaflets were confiscated. The comrades involved were from the following groups: Precari Nati (Bologna, Italy), Kolinko (Germany), Workers Against Work (GB). The following is the text of the confiscated leaflet, prepared for the Genoa demonstrations

THE WAR AND THE SPECTACLE

The orchestration of the Gulf war was a glaring expression of what the situationists call the spectacle — the development of modern society to the point where images dominate life. The PR campaign was as important as the military one. How this or that tactic would play in the media became a major strategical consideration. It didn't matter much whether the bombing was actually "surgical" as long as the coverage was; if the victims didn't appear it was as if they didn't exist. The "Nintendo effect" worked so well that the euphoric generals had to caution against too much public euphoria for fear that it might backfire. Interviews with soldiers in the desert revealed that they, like everyone else, depended almost totally on the media to tell them what was supposedly happening. The domination of image over reality was sensed by everyone. A large portion of the coverage consisted of coverage of the coverage. The spectacle itself presented superficial debates on the new level of instant global spectacularization and its effects on the spectator.

Nineteenth-century capitalism alienated people from themselves and from each other by alienating them from the products of their own activity. This alienation has been intensified as those products have increasingly become "productions" that we passively contemplate. The power of the mass media is only the most obvious manifestation of this development; in the larger sense the spectacle is everything from arts to politicians that have become autonomous representations of life. "The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation among people, mediated by images" (Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*).



Along with arms profits, oil control, international power struggles and other factors which have been so widely discussed as to need no comment here, the war involved contradictions between the two basic forms of spectacle society. In the diffuse spectacle people are lost amid the variety of competing spectacles, commodities, styles and ideologies that are presented for their consumption. The diffuse spectacle arises within societies of pseudoabundance (America is the prototype and still the unchallenged world leader of spectacle production, despite its decline in other regards); but it is also broadcast to less developed regions — being one of the main means by which the latter are dominated. Saddam's regime is an example of the rival concentrated spectacle, in which people are conditioned to identify with the omnipresent image of the totalitarian leader as compensation for being deprived of virtually everything else. This image concentration is normally associated with a corresponding concentration of economic power, state capitalism, in which the state itself has become the sole, all-owning capitalist enterprise (classic examples are Stalin's Russia and Mao's China); but it may also be imported into Third World mixed economies (such as Saddam's Iraq) or even, in times of crisis, into highly developed economies (such as Hitler's Germany). But for the most part the concentrated spectacle is a crude stopgap for regions as yet incapable of sustaining the variety of illusions of the diffuse spectacle, and in the long run it tends to succumb to the latter, more flexible form (as recently in eastern Europe and the USSR). At the same time, the diffuse form is tending to incorporate certain features of the concentrated one.

The Gulf war reflected this convergence. The closed world of Saddam's concentrated spectacle dissipated under the global floodlights of the diffuse spectacle; while the latter used the war as a pretext and a testing ground for implementing typically "concentrated" methods of control — censorship, orchestration of patriotism, suppression of dissent. But the mass media are so monopolized, so pervasive and (despite token grumbling) so subservient to establishment policies that overtly repressive methods were hardly needed. The spectators, under the impression that they were expressing their own considered views, parroted the catch phrases and debated the pseudoissues that the media had instilled in them day after day, and as in any other spectator sport loyally "supported" the home team in the desert by rooting for it.

This media control was reinforced by the spectators' own internalized conditioning. Socially and psychologically repressed, people are drawn to spectacles of violent conflict that allow their accumulated frustrations to explode in socially-condoned orgasms of collective pride and hate. Deprived of significant accomplishments in their own work and leisure, they participate vicariously in military enterprises that have real and undeniable effects. Lacking genuine community, they thrill to the sense of sharing in a common purpose, if only that of fighting some common enemy, and react angrily against anyone who contradicts the image of patriotic unanimity. The individual's life may be a farce, the society may be falling apart, but all complexities and uncertainties are temporarily forgotten in the self-assurance that comes from identifying with the state.



always preferring *talk*, or even the non-verbal, to *writing*, which, involving more thought is more 'inauthentic'. Yet speech is no less coded and conventional.

The trouble with the panacea of 'expressing emotion' is that this is just what cause exactly the kind of deaths and injuries which in turn call forth the 'expressions' of anger and vengeance.

If emotional literacy really meant the ability to recognize *other* people's emotions, then it must be said that the culture today must have a reading age of six, since it increasingly demands picture-book display of the strongest emotions, as if people were so insensitive that everything had to be pronounced out loud. You have to weep and wail before anyone can read the signs.

The virtue of 'feeling' in general remains utterly unconvincing. The realm of emotions is inexhaustible. Some feelings are a terrible affliction, while some people never experience other kinds of feelings, and both of these are tragic circumstances. What can 'feeling' in the abstract possibly mean?

Few people seem to have made the connection between the decline of social struggles and the triumph of the therapeutic. Still less has anyone suggested that at the root of the problem might lie the assertion of the chimera of the 'real self'. There are still plenty of people who avoid the limelight, who refuse self-disclosure, distrust therapy, and rely on their friends and neighbors rather than salaried professionals. For them, common sense is far from dead.

-Mike Peters-*Here and Now Journal* No. 18

the performing subjects, the more cool voice of the expertocracy serves to reinforce the protagonists in their collective impotence.

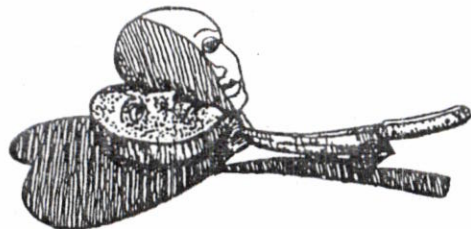
The studio audience is a microcosm of the domesticated 'mass' performing show, which teaches the impossibility of popular democracy- to prove the necessity for impersonal mediation of expert managers. People are required to tell their personal stories to cameras; only on condition some expert is there to have the last word.

Expression Training

Susie Orbac, psychotherapist-in-chief at the court of New Labour, preaches something called 'emotional literacy' through her organization 'Antidote', promoting the interests of therapy in public life. But it seems that as this 'emotional literacy' spreads people's ability to speak their minds withers away, and a crude expressivism renders us all more and more inarticulate.

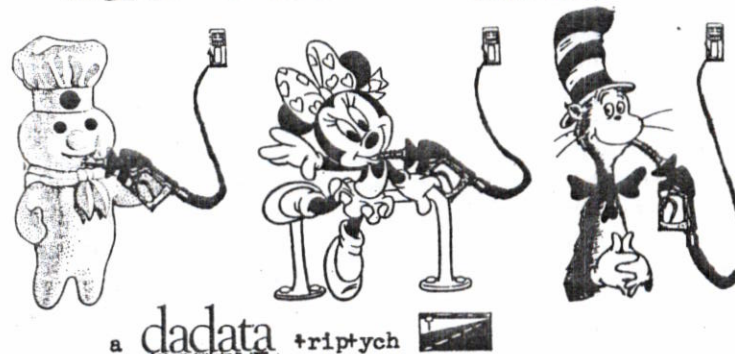
Literacy itself means learning a code, so as to be able to read and write. But can feelings be 'transcribed' like this? What is meant, one presumes, is the ability to describe one's feelings in language. But 'talking about' one's feelings or problems usually means learning by rote the wooden jargon of psychobabble, form which one gains only the need for more therapy.

The therapeutic ideology is now the unchallenged orthodoxy of everyday life. Its central tenet is expressivism- the panacea of 'expression'. This holds that emotions must always be 'expressed' like some kind of pus that it is healthy to drain off- better to let the 'stuff' out than keep it in. In fact those who uphold this crude doctrine are invariably scornful of 'literacy' (in the literal sense),



OIL SEX

AMERICA
RESPONDS
TO AIDS



War is the truest expression of the state, and its most powerful reinforcement. Just as capitalism must create artificial needs for its increasingly superfluous commodities, the state must continually create artificial conflicts of interest requiring its violent intervention. The fact that the state incidentally provides a few "social services" merely camouflages its fundamental nature as a protection racket. When two states go to war the net result is as if each state had made war on its own people — who are then taxed to pay for it. The Gulf war was a particularly gross example: Several states eagerly sold billions of dollars' worth of arms to another state, then massacred hundreds of thousands of conscripts and civilians in the name of neutralizing its dangerously large arsenal. The multinational corporations that own those states now stand to make still more billions of dollars restocking armaments and rebuilding the countries they have ravaged.

Whatever happens in the Middle East in the complex aftermath of the war, one thing is certain: The first aim of all the states and would-be states, overriding all their conflicting interests, will be to crush or coopt any truly radical popular movement. On this issue Bush and Saddam, Mubarak and Rafsanjani, Shamir and Arafat are all partners. The American government, which piously insisted that its war was "not against the Iraqi people but only against their brutal dictator," has now given Saddam another "green light": to slaughter and torture the Iraqis who have courageously risen against him. American officials openly admit that they prefer continued police-military rule in Iraq (with or without Saddam) to any form of democratic self-rule that might "destabilize" the region — i.e., that might give neighboring peoples the inspiration for similar revolts against their own rulers.

In America the "success" of the war has diverted attention from the acute social problems that the system is incapable of solving, reinforcing the power of the militarist establishment and the complacency of the patriotic spectators. While the latter are busy watching war reruns and exulting at victory parades, the most interesting question is what will happen with the people who saw through the show.

The most significant thing about the movement against the Gulf war was its unexpected spontaneity and diversity. In the space of a few days hundreds of thousands of people all over the country, the majority of whom had never even been at a demonstration before, initiated or took part in vigils, blockades, teach-ins and a wide variety of other actions. By February the coalitions that had called the huge January marches — some factions of which would normally have tended to work for "mass unity" under their own bureaucratic guidance — recognized that the movement was far beyond any possibility of centralization or control, and agreed to leave the main impetus to local grassroots initiative. Most of the participants had already been treating the big marches simply as gathering points while remaining more or less indifferent to the coalitions officially in charge (often not even bothering to stay around to listen to the usual ranting speeches). The real interaction was not between stage and audience, but among the individuals carrying their own homemade signs, handing out their own leaflets, playing their music, doing their street theater, discussing their ideas with friends and strangers, discovering a sense of community in the face of the insanity.

It will be a sad waste of spirit if these persons become ciphers, if they allow themselves to be channeled into quantitative, lowest-common-denominator political projects — tediously drumming up votes to elect "radical" politicians who will invariably sell them out, collecting signatures in support of "progressive" laws that will usually have little effect even if passed, recruiting "bodies" for demonstrations whose numbers will in any case be underreported or ignored by the media. If they want to contest the hierarchical system they must reject hierarchy in their own methods and relations. If they want to break through the spectacle-induced stupor, they must use their own imaginations. If they want to incite others, they themselves must experiment.

Those who saw through the war became aware, if they weren't already, of how much the media falsify reality. Personal participation made this awareness more vivid. To take part in a peace march of a hundred thousand people and then see it given equal-time coverage with a prowar demonstration of a few dozen is an illuminating experience — it brings home the bizarre unreality of the spectacle, as well as calling into question the relevance of tactics based on communicating radical viewpoints by way of the mass media. Even while the war was still going on the protesters saw that they had to confront these questions, and in countless discussions and symposiums on "the war and the media" they examined not only the blatant lies and overt blackouts, but the more subtle methods of media distortion — use of emotionally loaded images; isolation of events from their historical context; limitation of debate to "responsible" options; framing of dissident viewpoints in ways that trivialize them; personification of complex realities (Saddam = Iraq); objectification of persons ("collateral damage"); etc. These examinations are continuing and are giving rise to a veritable industry of articles, lectures and books analyzing every aspect of media falsification.

and the madder they need to be.

Today the mere fact that an emotion is real somehow insulates it from criticism. It furnishes legitimacy for whatever is done in its name. Should the public outrage be unleashed at the release of some criminal, then the poor sod must be kept inside even after the sentence is completed. Such is the 'democracy' of the stage-managed crowd, whose feelings must not be offended on condition that they are systematically deprived of their *common sense*. This pandering to public sentiment has grown in step with advances in the techniques for its manipulation, because the state only pays heed to the moods it can control. This parody of popular sovereignty is, however, carefully circumscribed to exclude the exercise of *reason*. Reason remains the preserve of those with power, for whom it is limited to the calculation of their own advantage. Leave rational thought to us, insist society's ever more irrational rulers, but show us your emotions than their reason so that we may better manage and manipulate you. And it is so much easier to manage people's emotions than their reason, for if the people were allowed to reason together, in other words, to exercise their common sense, then power would sooner or later be forced to disclose the real imperatives for its insane behavior.

Emotion Pictures

The antidote to direct democracy is daytime television. The media feed voraciously on emotions—literally hounding the victims of tragedies, while professionals prey upon personal problems like vultures, picking open every wound. The former promote the latter.

People come along to be in the audience of TV shows and find it impossible to tolerate the expression of opposing views. They are in fact invited in order to interrupt and *not* to listen to anyone else's voice. Their role is solely to express their own emotion in public, and they are not silenced if their passion ebbs. Presiding over these televised bear-pits are the ubiquitous experts—the therapists with wares to parade, Oprah, Ricki, Montel, Esther and the slimy Kilroy are just ads for the therapists, who usurp the role of reason, simply because they are passionately instrumental. And the more irrational



CRITIQUE OF INSTRUMENTAL EMOTION

The only thing worse than an isolated atomistic egocentric individual is a *mass* of such isolated, atomistic egocentric individuals, artificially united by:

- fake **grief** (over some celebrity victim)
- Phony **euphoria** (over a media spectacle)
- bogus **rage** (over shortages of teletubbies in the shops...)

These emotions demonstrate their own shallowness and superficiality by the rapidity with which they can be summoned into existence, displaced onto different objects and transformed into one another. They are subjectively 'real', but only according to the crazy dominant ideology that somehow validates them. In a sane society, people would *ashamed* to have hit a shop assistant in frustration at the shop not having sufficient supplies of Spice Girl dolls. In this society people laugh about it. Or maybe in a sane society, there would be no Spice Girls and no such roles as shop assistant or customers. The madder society gets, the more experts in mental disorders there are,

The most naïve see the falsifications as mere mistakes or biases that might be corrected if enough members of the audience call in and complain, or otherwise pressure the mass media into presenting a somewhat wider range of viewpoints. At its most radical this perspective is expressed in the limited but suggestive tactic of picketing particular media.

Others, aware that the mass media are owned by the same interests that own the state and the economy and will thus inevitably represent those interests, concentrate on disseminating suppressed information through various alternative media. But the glut of sensational information constantly broadcast in the spectacle is so deadening that the revelation of one more lie or scandal or atrocity seldom leads to anything but increased depression and cynicism.

Others try to break through this apathy by adopting the manipulative methods of propaganda and advertising. An antiwar film, for example, is generally assumed to have a "powerful" effect if it presents a barrage of the horrors of war. The actual subliminal effect of such a barrage is, if anything, prowar — getting caught up in an irresistible onslaught of chaos and violence (as long as it remains comfortably vicarious) is precisely what is exciting about war to jaded spectators. Overwhelming people with a rapid succession of emotion-rousing images only confirms them in their habitual sense of helplessness in the face of a world beyond their control. Spectators with thirty-second attention spans may be shocked into a momentary antiwar revulsion by pictures of napalmed babies, but they may just as easily be whipped into a fascistic fury the next day by different images — of flag burners, say.

Regardless of their ostensibly radical messages, alternative media have generally reproduced the dominant spectacle-spectator relation. The point is to undermine it — to challenge the conditioning that makes people susceptible to media manipulation in the first place. Which ultimately means challenging the social organization that produces that conditioning, that turns people into spectators of prefabricated adventures because they are prevented from creating their own.

Bureau of Public Secrets

3 April 1991

Reprinted from Public Secrets: Collected Skirmishes of Ken Knabb.





NOTES ON CONSCRIPTION

In the face of war between the U.S. (with the aid and support of many European nation-states) and various countries in the Middle East, conscription appears to be a dark possibility.

Forced conscription has not been utilized by the U.S. since the Vietnam war, where many upon receipt of their draft cards burned them or fled to Canada. The refusal to fight and die for rich scumbags animated the lives of young people, frequently turning individuals in opposition to the whole social order.

If one were to speculate on the potential for the emergence of an openly defiant anti-war/anti-conscription movement it could be said that it is quite probable. The youth of today appear fed up as they know there is no future for them flipping hamburgers, waiting on impatient customers, or going to fight and die in a war to maintain the capitalist infrastructure.

Such feelings that many of the young have are not clearly articulated expressions of rage and discontent, but it is nonetheless easily deducible that a large portion of the young can feel the emptiness of everyday life, which manifests itself in disrespect and disregard for work, and authority, as well as self destruction of oneself through drug abuse, suicide, and generalized depression.

No society could ever abolish the tendency for individuals to exhibit characteristics that are deemed today as "mentally ill". One can, however, hope that such behavior would not be conveniently dismissed as "mental illness". We think that the alienation one feels in society cannot be abolished completely. Alienation from the other is not something that is merely destroyed with obliteration of today's social structure, but as Sartre² pointed out, is an inherent part of the self-other relationship. Of course, without a debasing, exploitative, and degrading social structure such feelings are certainly not as prevalent.

But when one writes and speaks of utopian societies bereft of conflict, aggression, and yes-even murder, one is failing to recognize that no blueprints for a future society can be made. We can only trust our dreams, visions, imagination and many sided emotions-which even includes what the mores of capitalist society would deem as mentally ill or crazy- to impel us towards communism.

The movement to abolish existing conditions is happening today in everyday acts of revolt. It is up to those fed up with settling for life as it is to think and act in contradiction to the present. This along with linking up with others, and thus getting better at subversion, is the way out of a society built upon socially created "monsters" and "mentally ill deviants".

¹ **The Mass Psychology of Misery**, though an important and generally thorough text, leaves a certain question unanswered. Throughout much of the essay one can almost gather that he assumes a future society would lead to unbridled joy and happiness. Of course, joy and happiness are all but dead today-save for in their instrumental and spectalist forms- the point is not however to place those above pain and suffering. One should recognize that a balance between all of ones emotions is immensely important. Nonetheless, despite this minor point of disagreement, the text is strongly recommended and highly useful.

² See, for example, **Being and Nothingness** by Jean-Paul Sartre. Although the text is dense and thoroughly unreadable in places, some interesting ideas on the relationship between self and other are explored.

SOURCES:

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Therapy with its dichotomy between therapist and patient allows for the patient to spill her guts, while the therapist listens, and takes notes. The therapist is there to counsel, not to be a friend. The therapist, in turn, tells nothing of himself. Nothing of the therapist's problems or emotional issues are addressed, as that would make the therapist appear as a mere mortal. Thus the patient is objectified-made into a thing- while the counselor is conceived as the bearer of advice and truth. This has at times led to the manipulation of the therapist over the patient. Vulnerable, isolated, lonely, and alienated individuals (usually poor and homeless) can easily be taken advantage of physically and emotionally. Consequently this leads to the

further erosion of one's self worth, thus, addiction to drugs and alcohol becomes rampant. One's worth is not defined as a unique individual, but as an object churned out of the assembly line at the homeless shelter, and at various other institutions for which the individual turns for help in this disabling and emotionally instable society.

Of course, no one is merely the passive victim of manipulation and control, through one's own feelings of worthlessness, misery, and depression, this leads one to regard **any** sort of attention as superior to none at all. As a result individuals are, through regarding oneself as worthless, setting up a situation where they can be used, molested, and perceived as a mere object. This is not to deny that healthy relationships between patient and therapist can exist, but therapy as existing within the framework of an institution has to be analyzed and shown for how and why they exist.

Typically, the healthy therapist/patient relationships that do exist are outside of the institutional framework. Thus, the rich, light of being endowed with a large income, can *afford* to pay for services to a private therapist, while the poor cannot choose. The intent of raising this point is not to venerate private therapist over the institutional, but to conclude that, class has a direct bearing upon who can provide for perceived needs one encounters. The need that one feels for therapy is, of course, a socially produced need for community and strong friendships that move beyond superficiality.

ON THE MOVEMENT OF COMMUNISM

Criticizing moral order is not a way of saying "Everyone do what he wants and thanks to human goodness all will turn out for the best". The problem is not how to avoid conflict and norms, but to change the presently fallacious relationship to those norms. There is no other logic, no other meaning, and so no other guarantee of my actions than my relationship with my fellow man. The goal-and whole problem- would be, will be a norm not separate from my and from our actions.

Gilles Dauve

Communication must be stepped up so as the young come to recognize what many already know intuitively: that there is nothing that this social order offers to us. What is offered in terms of abstract monetary value for one's "services" is nothing compared with the loss of one's life through, in this case, sacrificial military service.

But today's young, I strongly think and feel, are not prepared to fight and die for the state and the economy. Military service has, up to this juncture, run on the basis of voluntary service. In this way individuals are not forced to become part of the military, but for some circumstance dictates a decision to enter the military. Through economics or manipulative recruitment tactics, many end up joining the military.

In fact the military has had increased difficulty in recruiting young people, which has led them to practice even slimier recruitment tactics. I have been repeatedly badgered on the street by military recruiters, who, of course, do not talk on the basis of communication, but rather offer a cheerily shrill enumeration of the benefits of military service.

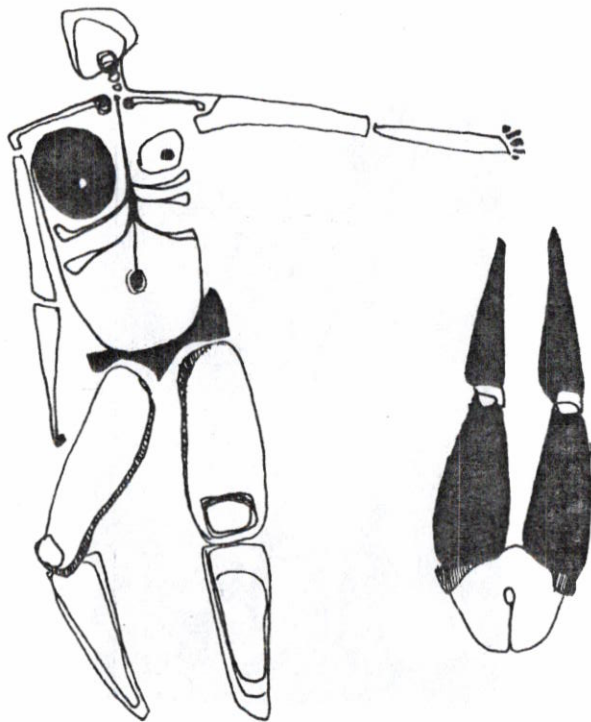
But to the government, such tactics will become useless if a draft is reinstated. Thus, if drafted, individuals will be forced to go and fight and potentially die in this war effort, or flee to Canada, or come together with others in defiance of the draft and the war effort as a whole. As the unfolding of events continues, only the future will tell if the draft will come into effect. Nonetheless, it is important to discuss the possibility of a draft, as many of the excluded may just find themselves receiving draft cards in the mail.



LET'S TURN THINGS AROUND

The 'youth wage' has become the pretext for a profound revolt among young people. Devalued and rejected before they've entered the 'work world' young people in colleges, high schools and suburbs are faced with massive unemployment. They already know they have no future in this society. **THEY ARE MADE WORTHLESS BECAUSE IN THE MODERN ECONOMY THEIR HUMANITY HAS NO MARKET VALUE...** work no longer makes sense. It no longer corresponds directly to human needs, but serves the insane expansion of consumption and creates more and more artificial and inhuman order of things. Work wastes incredible amounts of energy in the production of useless objects that destroy the environment... Some propose, with a straight face, the 'abolition of unemployment', when it's wage labor and money that needs to be abolished!... We have no ambitions other than to contribute to the movement, to help it find the reasons for what it's already done, and to go beyond what it has yet to accomplish...

--One of a series of leaflets signed,
"Some workers and unemployed"
March 1994 France



the fads of the present by constantly invoking trends of what happened in the past as having a psychological effect upon the present.

For example, through guilt tripping and the identification of certain of ones genetics (white, male), a whole plethora of theories have been constructed to establish a **psychological** understanding to an immensely complex **social** arrangement. Thus with recovered memory therapy it becomes easy for one to displace there own feeling of inferiority to there **past** rather than a complex array of social and economic factors. In this way, recovered memory therapy is firmly in the **present** by establishing the primacy of the psychological, over that of that of the social and economic structure of society.

Again it must be understood that our understanding of the socio-economic arrangement of society is not limiting in that it is saying that everything is based upon such factors. Genetics or biology might play a small part in our understanding, but even genetics are shaped by particular environmental factors that are specifically social. Pollution, what one was fed as they grew up, are all direct genetic factors, which are immediately social as well.

PATIENT AND THERAPIST

"The real purpose of the 'new places' of psychiatry...is that they are nothing but ghettos in which one does not find individuals interacting on the level of mutuality, but rather two 'categories' of persons in asymmetrical positions: the professionals and the clients, the healthy and the diseased, those who help and those who are helped; in these places, the healthy try to persuade the diseased that what they did and thought up to that time was wrong, or rather 'unhealthy'."

Marco Beaco





Recovered memory therapy is in many ways a reworking of conceptions Freud had regarding sexuality in infants and young children. He thought that stories his patients told him of sexual contact with their fathers or mothers were merely repressed fantasies and not repressed memories. His early theories asserted that such fantasies were, in fact, reality. He called this theory seduction theory. Essentially seduction theory states that all neuroses stem from repressed infantile sexual trauma, i.e. sexual abuse.

With this theory in hand, recovered memory therapy has created a profession built upon this assertion. Proponents want to hold to the Freud's early theory of hysteria, which includes his widely used theory of repressed memory. Recovered memory therapy postulates that what happened in ones childhood has a direct bearing upon there current reality in the world. Often through, hypnosis, one is lead to supposedly direct their thoughts into the past.

Our past certainly does have bearing upon the present, but the ironic thing about repressed memory therapy, is that it is not living in the past. It is within the context of capitals phase of real domination that fosters specific means of escaping the current social order. Thus, recovered memory therapy, serves in



TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Introduction: "I Don't Care If The Bourgeoisie Dies!"

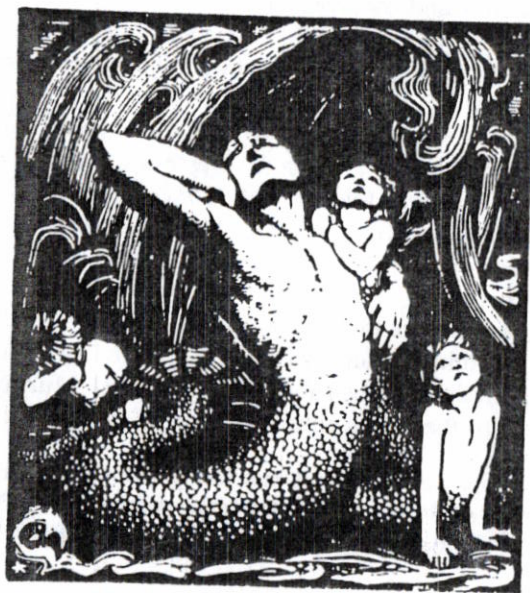
Recently I attended a lecture given by Murray Bookchin at the Institute for Social Ecology in Plainfield, Vermont (see "contact" section for more info). A long-time revolutionary theorist, historian, and author, he is perhaps best known as the founder of Social ecology—an anti-capitalist ideology which envisions a society somehow managed though federations of "directly democratic" "libertarian municipalist" assemblies. Bookchin is also known for his often cantankerous and argumentative personality. One of the reasons I enjoy his lectures is because of his ability to piss-off many of the wealthy college students who every summer flock to the ISE for a \$2,500 dose of "radical education". Although I have serious problems with Bookchin's ideology, and his tendency to misrepresent and quote out-of-context other writers and theorists—I do at times enjoy seeing certain rich kids getting their undies in a bunch when the privilege granted to them by capitalist society is confronted by Murray's advocating of class conflict and revolution.*

The subject of Murray's lecture was an interesting one, and was in fact the initial inspiration for the following essay. In his lecture, Murray discussed the changes that have occurred in capitalism over the past 100 years. He acknowledged that the expansion of capital into its current phase has produced a complicated and often obscured class composition—one which cannot be defined as clearly as in the days (turn of the last century) when a large percentage of the U.S. workforce was employed in the industrial sector (factories, mines, shipyards, etc.), where they could be clearly differentiated from those in the ruling capitalist class. Murray's lecture ended with a challenge to the young revolutionaries of today. An aging man who

* Readers familiar with Bookchin's work may find this suprising, as class struggle is rarely discussed in his writings. In recent years, however, it seems as though Murray has returned somewhat to his Marxist roots. In his old age, he also seems to be increasingly self-contradictory.

had dedicated his life to advancing a revolution that he will probably never get to see, Murray challenged us to develop a coherent theoretical understanding of contemporary capitalism and its class composition so as to facilitate the emergence of a contend able revolutionary movement in the 21st century.

The real fun, however, occurred a bit later that evening at dinnertime. After the talk, Murray and those in attendance retired to the ISE's dining area, where over a meal of spaghetti and garden salad, Murray was joined at a table with the two editors of BSN (myself being one of them) and a dozen or so ISE students and staff. After being seated, some ISE students and faculty began to discuss Murray's lecture. Many of them seemed to be convinced that the complexity of class composition in contemporary society somehow makes class struggle obsolete and irrelevant to today's revolutionary movement. While disturbing, this faulty analysis is predictable coming from financially well-off individuals who hold an economic interest in maintaining capital's current social structure. One woman went so far as to suggest that everyone is equally oppressed under contemporary capitalism because "even the rich can be victims of cancer" acquired through exposure to industrial pollutants. To this statement Murray replied by angrily pounding his fist on the table and proclaiming: "I don't care if the bourgeoisie dies! They live comfortably!"



to continue. Today the situation is similar "If one is "depressed", it is because you have a biochemical imbalance, rather than, perhaps, that your life has no meaning. If one goes to war it is because of individual "aggressive genes", rather than your being the pawn of complex socio-political forces over which you have no control"(Black, 2001).

The solution for such, as prescribed by the experts and the authorities, is the further suppression of one's feelings through the taking of an assortment of drugs. These drugs do little, if anything, to combat any hypothetical "depression" center; rather they act by dulling one's emotions in general. One feels pleasant after taking such drugs- as it is an escape from reality- but in the long term they serve to dampen the user's emotions.

A description of an individual who took Prozac for a period of time, described that it completely suppresses emotional content, not necessarily thinking. A complete dumbing of feeling and sensitivity is a very strong side effect of the drugs Prozac, Paxil and Zoloft.

Instead of examining social factors, doctors are now ready to hand out anti-depressants, when many doctors know that most anti-depressants have not been adequately tested. For example Prozac "was released onto the market with only six weeks of clinical trials" (Black, 2001). It is to be expected, that doctors as part of the capitalist structure, cannot be expected to act in accordance with any sort of ethic. It is, however, interesting to note that, like Brave New World the population is prescribed drugs by specialists to blunt one's sensitivity.

RECOVERED MEMORY THERAPY

"Avoid being tentative about your repressed memories. Do not just tell them; express them as truth. If months or years down the road, you find you are mistaken about the details, you can always apologize and set the record straight."

Renee Fredrickson, Repressed Memories

Recovered memory therapy appears to have entered the American landscape in the 1980's. Sigmund Freud, however, discussed the concept of the unconscious mind being a world seemingly of its own in the early 1900's. Such a world harbored memories, thoughts, desires, and instinct, which fight among themselves to control ones behavior.



beds, and electroshock, but similarly these never assure that one's emotions will be obliterated entirely.

Some specialists go so far as saying that a genetic defect exists in the brain, which triggers particular emotional reactions. Certain of one's genetics might play a small factor in the way one behaves, but environmental factors play a more easily transparent and directly understood role. Thus we contend that emotional outbursts, depression, and so on are due to social factors for which the individual has to conform to daily. When one feels as if their life is meaningless, because of factors such as crappy job, isolation, repressed emotions and generalized alienation, one is sure to manifest tendencies often regarded as "mentally ill".

The double standard of assigning certain behavioral characteristics as "mentally ill" manifests itself in the current social order where the soldier who goes off to kill people is deemed as a good trooper, while one who kills his neighbor is defined as a lunatic. Thus pointing to the fact that categories this social order assigns are not based upon actual reality, but rather their basis is in the particular social mores of the time.

"MENTAL ILLNESS" AS DISEASE?

The widely espoused belief among those who hold to the ideology that certain individuals need therapy is the completely ridiculous assertion that mental "illnesses" are diseases. Behaviors defined as mental illness are not diseases. They are not diseases because these behaviors do not meet "the established scientific criterion for disease, namely, a derangement in the structure or function of *cells, tissues, and organs*." (Szasz, 1999). Even if they did meet this criterion it still would be reducing a whole being to its mere particular constituents: the complex to the simple, the higher to the lower. One can, however, use elements of the reductionist paradigm to debunk the myths capitalist science has created.

The brain is not separate from the mind. The mind is a key constituent of the brain. The fact that proponents of the "disease of mental illness" promote a separation between the mind and brain is not surprising. The reality is that the mind implies agency, intentionality, and motivation, while the brain itself provides matter for the functioning of the mind. To quote Thomas Szasz "Behavior is not-and cannot be-a disease, except in psychiatry. Controlling behavior with or without a person's consent is not-and cannot be-a treatment, except in psychiatry. And faking illness is not- and cannot be-an illness, except in psychiatry." (Szasz, 1999).

EVERYONE SHALL BE TAKING SOMA

In Aldous Huxley's book *Brave New World*, the population was given narcotics to dull their emotions, thus happily allowing ones own immiseration

Indeed the bourgeoisie does live comfortably, and still today as in the 19th century, the comfort of the bourgeoisie depends upon the misery of the rest of us. The proletariat—those of us forced to sell our labor for a wage, or other wise live on the streets, scrape by on welfare, or go to prison—exist only so that those who own the means of production (the rich, AKA the *bourgeoisie*) may benefit from our exclusion and exploitation. This essay is our contribution to a renewed analysis of capitalism and class struggle in the 21st century, particularly in the United States. We look forward to hearing more discussion on this topic, and moreover, look forward to the day when all social classes are abolished completely.

Capitalism is everywhere, yet much less visible than 100 or 50 years ago when class distinctions ostensibly showed up. The manual worker identified the factory owner at one glance, knew or thought he knew his enemy, and felt he'd be better off the day he and his mates got ride of his boss. Today classes still exist, but manifested through different degrees of consumption, and no one expects a better world through public ownership of industry. The "enemy" is an impalpable social relationship, abstract yet real, all-pervading yet no monster beyond our reach: because the proletarians are the ones that produce and reproduce the world, they can disrupt and revolutionize it.

Gilles Dauve and Francios Martin
The Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement

Class Struggle Then and Now

In 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels first published "The Communist Manifesto". This text traced the history of class struggle up to the development of capitalism at that time. Referring to their own era, Marx and Engels declared: "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat." Marx believed that capitalism would inevitably develop into conditions whereby proletarian revolution would overthrow the bourgeoisie and create a communist society. Translated into dozens of languages, "The Communist Manifesto" inspired participants of proletarian revolutionary movements on every continent.

But much has changed since Marx's time. We have not seen the success of the proletarian revolutions which he so confidently predicted. Those which came closest ended sadly in the defeat of the proletariat as capitalist rulers were merely replaced with state-capitalist rulers (IE: Russia, China, etc.). Today capitalism is stronger than ever. Reaching global proportions, it continues its drive to colonize every remaining semi-free space on the planet. Having survived numerous crises, capital has proved itself flexible and resilient, and today reaches levels of domination more terrible than Marx could have ever imagined.

A significant difference between the capitalism of Marx's time and the capitalism of our own era can be found in their differing class compositions. In the capitalism of the 19th century, manual workers could for the most part differentiate between themselves and the capitalist bosses who owned the factories and mills. Although it was not always clearly articulated, a sort of proletarian consciousness often existed within the industrial workforce of Europe and North America prior to World War II. In some sense, the working-class (those forced to sell their labor to survive) recognized a more or less antagonistic relationship between themselves and the capitalist bosses who exploited them. Any serious revolutionary during this time period recognized that a successful revolution would have to begin with conflict between the two opposing classes-- proletarian and bourgeoisie.

Today, of course, classes still exist. In fact, the gap between rich and poor is the widest it has ever been. As much as ever, people feel desperate, alienated, or otherwise excluded from the supposed benefits of capitalist society. Yet class consciousness, or an awareness of class (let alone an articulate analysis of class), seems to be at an all-time low. This is particularly evident here in the U.S., where many jobs traditionally considered "working-class" (mostly manual labor in factories, mills, mines, shipyards, etc.) have been moved to third world countries where companies can exploit workers for lower wages. In many cases, jobs formerly performed by wage workers have been rendered obsolete, as humans are constantly being replaced by computers and robots which can produce at faster speeds and with greater cost efficiency.

The proletariat of contemporary "post-industrial" capitalism is fragmented. While some industrial labor remains, today's wage-slave finds herself surrounded more and more by computers. Employment for the working-class is found increasingly in the service sector—in sales and customer service—where employment is often temporary or part-time, personal interaction between workers is minimized, and the workers mind is continually consumed with the boring banalities of computer programs and customer assistance. Others in their attempts to survive find themselves



ON "MENTAL ILLNESS", THERAPY, AND REVOLT

INTRODUCTION

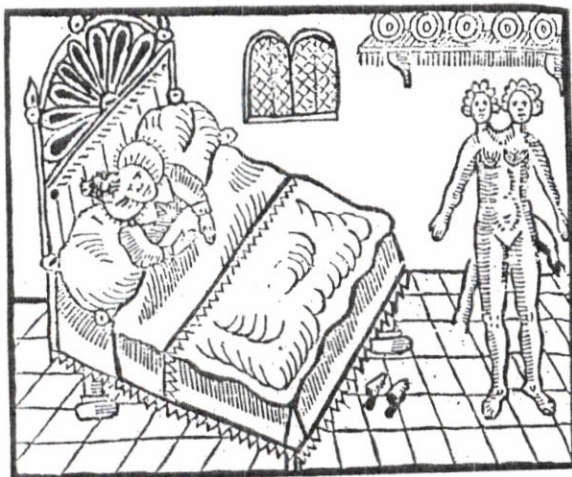
The question of "mental illness" and its therapeutic counterpart(s) is one, which has not been thoroughly explored in the U.S. with an explicitly **revolutionary** perspective. John Zerzan in his essay *The Mass Psychology of Misery*¹ has examined such within a certain important framework (though at times limiting), *Willful Disobedience* wrote an excellent piece regarding therapy within a certain context, *Here and Now* journal from the UK has in an all encompassing manner, explored the many sides of the current phase of capitalism—which strongly manifests itself in therapy and various other fads.

MENTAL ILLNESS: DOES IT EXIST? OR DOES IT NOT?

There is no such thing as mental illness. It is merely a convenient label for grouping and isolating cases where identification has not occurred properly. Those whom power can neither govern nor kill, it taxes with madness.

Raoul Vaneigem

"Mental illness" does not exist as a manifestation of a specific sickness, because one cannot remove emotions like one removes a tumor. A psychiatrist can, through the prescription of drugs, repress one's emotions, but could virtually never destroy one's socially produced feelings completely. Of course, drugs are only part of the picture: there is also the asylum, constraint



CREEPING LIKE A SNAIL UNWILLINGLY TO SCHOOL

The increase in factory production and its corollaries- offices, post & telegraph railways, telephone departments- necessitated that the workers be acquainted with the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. This provided the spur for literacy and schooling, and hastened the conversion of artisans and peasants into wage workers.

The increase in wage-work by women, especially in the twentieth century made literacy crucial for women if they were to work in factories, offices and railways, and in telegraph and telephone departments. The same necessity which acted as the spur for the increase in male literacy formed the major force behind the demand for increased education for women.

Investments by governments in the education system are to produce more productive workers for the industries of today and tomorrow. This constantly increases the workload on children, parents and teachers. Ironically, those far-sighted individuals- the proponents of the present school system- who saw and advocated the possibility of increased production and extraction through literate wage-workers have earned appreciation as vanguards of a humane society.

The spinal disorders that education is endowing onto children due to back-breaking book-loads; the increasing suicides due to nerve shattering stress of competitiveness and the parameters of success; and the continual lowering of the age at which educational instruction begins are posing problems to the halo of benevolence around education.

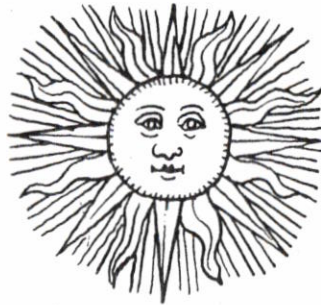
--Kamunist Kranti-India

unemployed, in prison, homeless, in the military, on welfare, working day labor, or selling illegal drugs. The fragmentation is worsened by the proletariat's internal hierarchies, which are of course promoted and exploited by the bourgeoisie. Having internalized the ideology of capitalist consumerism (of which they have been surrounded since birth), and feeling a lonely absence of community or loving relationships; the modern proletarian learns to value himself and others according to the individual's ability to purchase and own commodities. Thus, a worker who makes a "livable" wage may consider himself superior to a day worker or welfare recipient, despite the fact that he could easily find himself in the same situation given the arising of a particular economic crisis.

Divisions among the proletariat are also perpetuated by the age-old prejudice of racism. Since European settlers first landed on the shores of "North America," racist ideology promoted by government institutions, christian propaganda, and prominent bourgeoisie philosophers has managed to wrongly convince poor white people that Blacks and other people of color are somehow inferior to themselves. With the falsely invented category of "race," white capitalists have often managed to neutralize the potential for revolution in the U.S. by diverting class anger into racial hatred.* The result, of course, has been some of history's worst atrocities—slavery, genocide, lynching, and other violence—carried out by poor and working-class Whites against Blacks, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans. While in the past these divisions were encouraged through blatantly racist propaganda (Jim Crow laws, etc.), they are now promoted through more subtle means (for example, media images portraying Black people as violent criminals are used as justification for more police control and the expansion of the U.S. prison industrial complex, a growing industry which currently holds more than 2 million prisoners, a disproportionate number of whom are black males or other people of color). Having grown up as targets in a racist society, it is understandable that many proletarian people of color are often hesitant to trust white people in general.



The complex class composition of contemporary capitalism in the U.S. is also characterized by a "middle class" which is often hard to clearly define. Marx defined the middle class (or *petit bourgeoisie*) as those who owned means of production that are either small or personal. This also includes professionals who hold highly specialized skills. Generally this class includes artisans, craftspeople, doctors, engineers, teachers, shopkeepers, and family farmers, to name a few. While they are not as wealthy or powerful as the bourgeoisie (who own the primary means of production), they tend to share more in common with the bourgeoisie than with the proletariat (who own no means of production) because they generally reap a benefit from their role within the capitalist economy. In times of economic crisis, however, it is possible that members of the middle class may slide down the socio-economic ladder into a proletarian status.



"Even in Marx's time, these middling classes were an amalgam of disparate social elements; something that has only gotten more pronounced with capitalism's development. Marx himself tossed in government bureaucrats, and debated whether to include the growing number of white collar workers in the middle class. Highly skilled workers, blue or white collar, certainly extend into this category from below, as do middle and upper management from above. Any modern portrait of the middle class is further complicated by such phenomena as the generalized, if impotent ownership of corporate stocks by working and middle class people and the unionization efforts of government workers, even doctors and lawyers. Thus it's virtually impossible to assign a unified class interest to such a hodgepodge, or to draw any clean line between the working and middle classes on the one hand, and the middle and capitalist classes on the other hand. In turn, this works to the advantage of the capitalist ruling class, which seeks to deny the existence of social classes, prevent the growth of class consciousness in the lower classes, and defuse any form of class struggle or resistance to corporate domination"***

ON PROJECTED LIVING

But some of us burn with an energy that goads us towards something else different. In our burning we suffer anguish from every humiliation the present world imposes on us. Moved to decisive action by our passion, against all the odds we come to view life differently—or more precisely, to live differently.

-Wolfgang Landstreicher

When we speak of concrete projects aimed at uniting theory and practice, this is not meant to be realized merely in the abstract, but as an everyday approach to relating, and acting—or to be more exact: living. The intention is to hone analysis with our everyday experience of life under capitalism. Thus with a sharper mind one can better understand the world under which one is forced to live, while one's experience can complement one's quick intellect.

Our relation with others can be transformed into a direct means of relating based upon strength in contrast to weakness. Relating can thus become a means by which one expresses one's ideas, visions, and direct experience. The level of communication is taken beyond that of mere petty, boring, tiring small talk and "hanging out", thus one's relations are transformed into moments of desire rather than dull wage slave like repetition. In this way one can grasp hold of one's life, seeing the complexity and myriad of relations, while struggling in the long run to collectively overturn capital and the state.

Clearly aimed projects refers to realizing one's own potentiality within the context of projects of defiance. Thus clearly aimed projects are not simply a one-day event or an on-going zine project, but rather such projects serve as a part of an overall approach to one's life. For those who demand more than the monolithic mundanity of commodity consumption and idle chatter, it is high time to project beyond that which exists and create one's life for oneself.



In advanced capitalism everything is done for us, including thinking. What this means for many, even anarchists is a constant reproduction of this society's imbalanced dichotomy between thinking and acting. Thus it is more important to act than to think, while for academic anarchists it is more important to think than to act. In spite of the fact that the bourgeoisie wants us to believe it to be so, thought and action are inseparable.

The charge of "intellectual elitism" is so ridiculous in that it *assumes* if one makes use of a large vocabulary, they must have attended a prestigious university. Having never been educated outside of high school and having worked at various crappy jobs my whole life, this charge is simply pathetic. Usually this charge is from those who *assume* they know what people want, and proceed to tell me that the language is off-putting to the average person. Very often the person describing this seemingly complex anti-theory theory, are typically college educated anarchist/activist types who aim to be the next politicians. They, thus, instead of representing their own ideas try to represent other peoples perceived desires and ideas.

As *Aufheben* state in issue #6, of an article entitled, Death of a Paper Tiger; Reflections on Class War, "For most of the history of the proletarian movement, a demanding critical thought was not seen as alien or elitist. In fact research into the use of union libraries, workers' book collections, radical publishers etc shows that "deep" theoretical works were far more widely read amongst sections of the proletariat than the upper classes. Knowledge was something that had to be fought for collectively and did not come cheap to the poor, and was therefore all the more highly valued. Proles were open to theory if it could be seen to be useful and related to their own reality and struggle. There were also many lectures, debates, meetings, and workers educational events regularly held; *"it can be estimated on the basis of published speakers lists in various journals that between 1885 and 1939 there were approximately 100 street corner meetings per week throughout London"* self educated artisan/ worker theoreticians produced by the international culture include, Weitling, Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Dietzgen, Bill Haywood, B. Traven, Paul Mattick, Lucy Parsons, Nester Makhno, Peter Arshinov, Jack Common, Fundi the Caribbean Situationist etc."¹ The author then goes on to state that this is not mentioned as romantic nostalgia for the past, but to show how working class culture has been repressed and we suffer its loss today. It is not made exactly clear in the text how such culture has been repressed, but we can only surmise that it is due to factors such as the rise of capitals real domination and the continued invasion of the spectacle in every sphere of life.

Thus, those who by stating that theory is detached drivel are neglecting to recognize that great social upheavals only occur when people rise above the conditions capital and state impose upon them. This means that we become architects of our destiny destroying the barriers set between mind and body. If this makes one with clear projects an elitist intellectual, I would rather be known as a thinking elitist intellectual, than a stupid ideologue.

¹ This article in *Aufheben* #6 is part of the Intakes section of the magazine where they print reader's thoughts and ideas that in some ways coincide with the theory presented in *Aufheben*. This essay in particular, was meant as critique of the newspaper Class War's sensational reporting and often-inane lack of analysis. See our contacts section for the *Aufheben* website to read the full article.



Class composition in the U.S. becomes even more complicated when we consider the many proletarian wage workers who confusedly identify as "middle class". Much of this is a result of the internalization of capitalist consumer values discussed earlier.

While an understanding of social classes can give us a general idea of where certain people's economic interests may lie, it is also important to understand people on an individual basis. While the primary impetus of revolt will always rise from the proletariat, there will be enemies of the revolution within the working class, just as there will be some participants of the revolution from what could be considered the middle class. An understanding of the interests and motivations of certain individuals will help us to distinguish between friends and enemies when class conflict erupts into insurrection and revolution.

Suggestions that class struggle is no longer relevant to revolutionary theory and practice should be met with high suspicion. Those who make such claims are either naïve, misguided, or middle/upper class and unwilling to confront their privilege. A continually updated analysis of capitalism and class is as crucial to the development of revolutionary theory today as it was one hundred years ago. As we have seen, classes still exist. Our understanding of changing class dynamics will help us in our struggle to destroy capitalism and all of the warped social relations which it produces.

* Often ignored in history books are the inspiring examples of working-class whites teaming-up with their black and brown brethren in the fight against slavery, racism, and capitalism. For more info check out: *Race Traitor*, PO Box 499, Dorchester MA 02122.

** Hooligan, "Lefty", "What's Left?" Maximumrocknroll Issue #221, October 2001

Criticism has torn up the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that man shall wear the unadorned, bleak chain but so that he will shake off the chain and pluck the living flower.

-Karl Marx



The workers cannot participate in "democracy's fight against fascism" for the simple reason that there is no such fight. To fight against fascism means for the workers in the hitherto democratic countries to fight first of all against the democratic branch of fascism within their own countries[.....] There is little difference between that economic "coordination" that is achieved, and sometimes not achieved, by the political decrees of victorious nazism, fascism, and bolshevism, and this new "corporate community" that has been created by a slow, but relentless process in this country through the system of "interlocking directories", through the activities of major financial institutions, through particular interest groups, through firms rendering legal, accounting and similar services to the larger corporations, through "intercorporate stockholdings" and a number of other devices[.....] There is, however, a difference. The corporate community of the U.S. has yet only the "economic basis" of a full fledged totalitarian system, and not its political and ideological superstructure. On the other hand one might say that in backward countries like (fascist) Italy and Spain there exists yet only the totalitarian superstructure without a fully developed economic base.

-Karl Korsch

dumpster diving as revolutionary, one is merely making a *moral* protest against this society. The refusal to buy certain items produced by capitalism is laudable, but is in the long run doing little, if nothing, to change social relations.

Going back to the original point of increasing stupidity, one only has to look at "novels", movies, television, and art the spectacle churn out. A perpetual numbing of our rational and creative sensibilities is constantly reinforced daily by our submission to the dictates of control at work, on the street, and every other sphere of our everyday life. This in turn, logically, penetrates "radical" discourse. A reversion to infantilism takes place. Thus, in the absence of real critique one resorts to empty sloganeering, yelling, irrational outbursts, and an inability to comprehend anything strongly logical, well-reasoned, and articulate. Ideas, which have a logical development, are deemed as "intellectual", while that which can be reduced to three word slogans is embraced. Complex analysis is shunned in favor of ideology and empty gesticulation. Why would one embrace open stupidity?



consider myself) is a whole host of name calling, such as "intellectual elitist" and the best of all "disconnected from the real issues affecting people". If thinking for yourself and the subsequent elaboration of this in the form of a project aimed at the destruction of the present constitutes intellectualism, then I damn well am an intellectual.

If one were to contrast this with the ideology and rhetoric of many anarchists, it would make a hell of a lot of sense if there were more elitist intellectuals. The complete lack of self-initiation, creativity, and strong intellectual facilities among anarchists has led many to parrot ideology after ideology.

The communist zine, *Against Sleep and Nightmare*, defines ideology as, "The thought of power—ideas in the service of power. Ideology is frozen thought, but not all frozen thoughts are ideology. The *ideologist* develops empty rhetoric whose real appeal is to a person's unstated (and often unconscious) interest in maintaining their immediate material conditions—their part in capitalism. When a subjectivist says, "all that matters is immediate pleasure", their rhetoric might be appealing to a student because it would justify their vapid parasitic existence. "Everyone's got to work, it's only fair" might make those forced to work 60 hour weeks feel slightly better." I would also add that in contrast to post modernist denial of objective reality, unwavering opposition to capital and state does not constitute an ideology. It becomes an ideology when conceived of as separate from our everyday struggles against the many headed capitalist hydra. Thus, when we think and act as if freedom is only available outside the immediacy of our being, then an ideology has been created.

Subsequently we get a whole host of ideologies expressing a *partial* critique of capital, while neglecting to unify them as a critique of the totality. Thus, one encounters individuals focusing on feminism, racism, or homophobia, which serves the interest of capital, by allowing the state with capital to absorb its opposition. Laws are established barring discrimination of women, and minorities, while the institutional structure of capitalism remain unchallenged. Certainly this is not to deny or downplay the experience of women, minorities, the poor and other disaffected people, but when one does not analyze today's society within an all encompassing framework, it becomes easy for capital to recuperate our partial struggles. Creating an ideology out of oppression can also lead one to focus on changing minds and excessive psychologizing, rather confronting sexism, racism etc as they enter our everyday lives.

To return to the original point, the bourgeoisie has done a remarkable job in making much of the population appear infantile and stupid. This is reproduced even among those who make reference to "revolution". I shall not even attempt to elaborate extensively on what this word means to many anarchists, but can slightly draw out its superficial meaning. To many "revolution", -that term which has been

recuperated even by those who constantly make use it- merely refers to dumpster diving, avoidance of work, scamming, stealing and so on, rather than the creation of projects, relations and association aimed at the destruction of the existent. Of course, such things as scamming and the like are useful, but only if part of a broader based project. When one upholds the virtues of stealing, scamming and



A review of Yarostan Vocek and Sophia Nachalo's Letters of Insurgents

Letters of Insurgents is a sorely neglected book written in 1976 by Fredy Perlman. In my opinion, *Letters of Insurgents* is Fredy's most important work. Additionally, *Letters of Insurgents* is one of the most incisive accounts of life under advanced capitalism. The writing style is fluid, engaging, and poetically articulated.

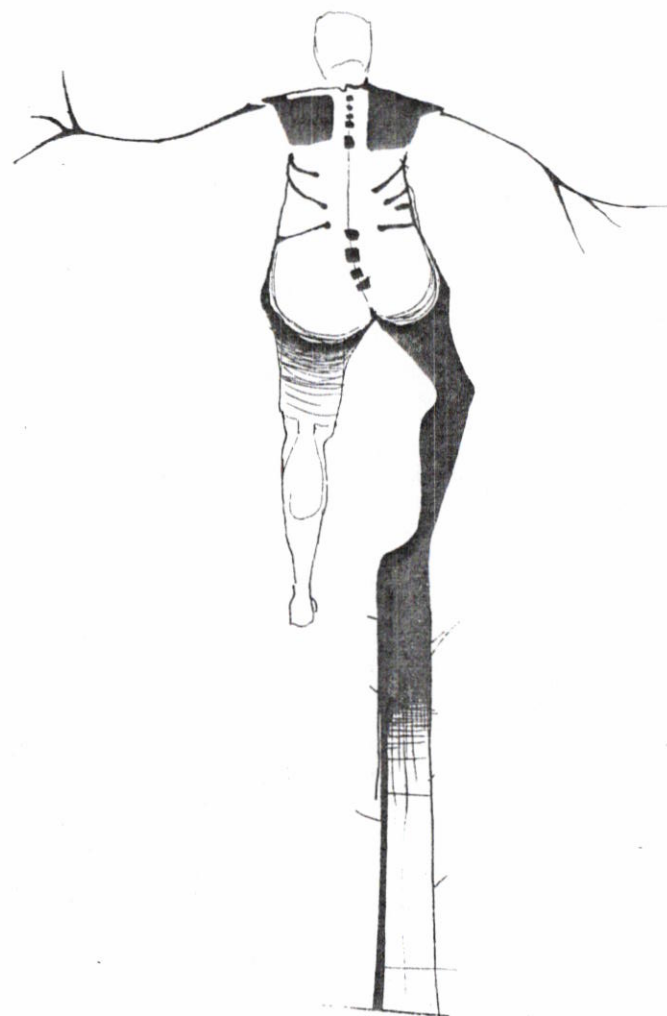
The contents of *Letters of Insurgents* consists of letters exchanged between two once lovers, Yarostan Vocek and Sophia Nachalo. Meeting on the front lines of a wildcat strike (presumably Paris, France 1968), they then proceed to engage in projects together. Apparently the character, Sophia combines elements of Fredy himself with that of friends and acquaintances, while Yarostan is a composite of many different individuals Fredy met. The significance of the letters they exchange lies in the fact that Sophia immigrated to the U.S., while

Yarostan was forced to stay in prison in Eastern Europe. Sophia's immigration to the U.S. is the continual thread running through the letters. Yarostan and Minnie (Yarostan's wife) are forever questioning why Sophia was released from jail after a short period of time.

The genius of this book lies in Fredy's ability to relate situations and ideas in a passionate, but yet, rational manner. The primary theme of the book is self-realization within the context of struggle. In addition, projects, which aim to subsume the individual to a higher authority, are deeply questioned. This being the union bureaucracy, authoritarian Leninist/Trotskyite/Maoist sects, the underground trades such as; stealing cars and reselling them, as well as prostitution and so on. Fredy with keen observational, and analytical skills makes an elaborate critique of such practices.



With details so rich and absorbing, some of the most penetrating critiques are made of professionalism in the service of avowed revolutionary projects. The character Daman Hesper is a perfect manifestation of this. Daman, a professor at a university, is one of those whose true objectives is not to create projects allowing individuals to communicate, but rather projects which would manipulate individuals. He pushes his vanguardist paper as if it speaks for all enlightened workers, thus leading him to act arrogantly toward those who do not subscribe to his brand of dogma. Similarly,



CRITIQUE IDEAS, NOT THE WAY ONE PRESENTS THEM

I am regularly bombarded with charges that the form in which we present ideas in this zine is *too* difficult. To this I typically respond with, "yes the language we make use of is not that of your daily newspaper, Time magazine or the latest literary pop cliché, but that should not stop a self-avowed advocate for a libertarian society from reading it". This usually elicits a reaction rather a thoughtful, reasoned response. Thus, we are typically lambasted with a reactionary anti-intellectual infantilism. In this way the argument is directed away from the *content* (ideas, logical connected patterns of thought) to that of the *form* (the words we make use of, and sentence structure) thus, what we get for a response among many anarchists (which I don't

The best things in life are free

The "Black Christmases" and five-finger discounts mentioned here are ways people like you and me respond to the exploitative, declining society around us. In Italy they call shoplifting "proletarian shopping" because conscious working-class rebels know that everything in this society has been created by the exploitation of our labor power, and that any goods we want to take or destroy should be ours.

Everything you see in any store—you should take it without paying. Have fun and don't get caught—best to take friends with you, a big group, and do it all at the same time. Go ahead. Take it. It should be yours...

HAVE A MERRY X-MAS SHOPLIFTING SEASON!

-ANGRY WORKERS GROUP-(KEVIN KEATING)



The dream of insurrection hides in the wondrous caverns of the minds of all who still possess a grain of real life. Dreams spring from reality and are realized in it.

-Wolfi Landstreicher

Yarostan living in Eastern Europe, sees through the power of professional rulers in the service of the proletariat. He knows and feels that these professionals are nothing more than well-paid scoundrels. Their gestures, movements, thoughts, and speeches are choreographed to the dictates of the party bureaucracy.

He does not stop at merely examining the failures and co-optation, but also scans the horizon discovering that worthwhile projects can still occur. Thus meaning that all the pain, wage-slavery, depression, and poverty we experience can only be translated into projects of defiance. To put it in Fredy's words; "If we don't destroy the old life, if we don't project and begin to create a new life, then we're only going to reenact our slavery on the graves of our fallen comrades".

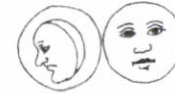
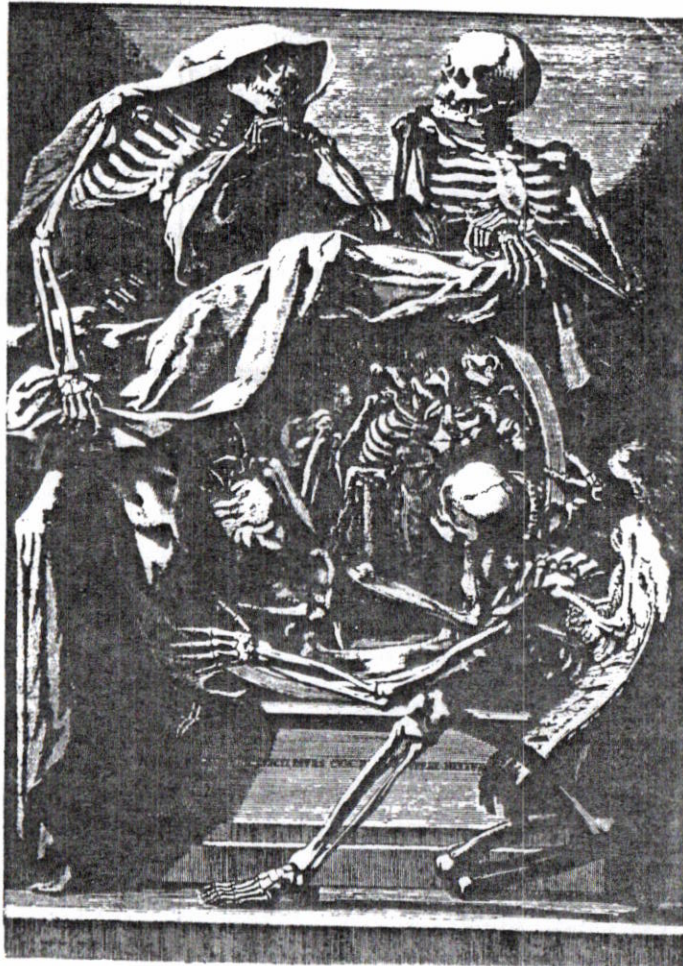
Few books have had the same impact upon me as *Letters of Insurgents*. In terms of clarity and genuine concern for living in contradiction to the present, Fredy, though not flawless, strove for the realization of the ideas set forth in this book. The ideas established have helped me better assess situations as they occur within my own everyday life. But that should be the task of theory: to know no separation between our experience and a concrete analysis of it. *Letters of Insurgents* proves to be a treasure trove of ideas and experience. At a staggering 831 pages, this book, despite its size, is a beautiful tool for those looking to go beyond the activist games and anarchist spectacles so prevalent today.

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We struggle for authenticity within our abstract lives and occasionally, perhaps when the moon is full, the evening hot and humid, we see in a moment of violent clarity and absurd despair that authenticity is inescapable—the product of all acts, however minor, however evasive, however “unlike us”. We are bystander and accomplice, victim and perpetrator, nightmare and fantasy, outlaw and artist”

- John Barret Erickson



PRICES REDUCED TO ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

It's the holiday season, shoppers! A time of crass commercialism, expressing what one of the most fundamental duties as obedient American citizens is—our duty to defend the economy! To buy things! Any kind of things! Fireproof flocked Christmas trees, plastic reindeers on suburban lawns, specials on MTV...to all this, we say, “Bah Humbug!”

But the death-trip of commodity exchange that the Christmas season expresses in a heightened form finds an opposition from pissed-off proletarians everyday of the year.

As Harry Cleaver noted in *Reading Capital Politically*, “Among those hit hardest by rising prices and lowered availability there has been growing militant direct action to counter the inevitable reduction of their income. They have passed from anger to direct appropriation and violent protest. Throughout the United States, business losses, and working class gains, from shoplifting have been steadily rising as more and more of the lowest paid workers refuse to pay the rising prices. In Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, stealing from the state has continued to grow. In places as diverse as Turin, Italy and Crystal City, Texas, workers have refused to pay rising gas and electricity bills and have practiced what has become known as the “self reduction” of prices. Ripping off Ma Bell has become widespread practice in the United States.”

I'm dreaming of a black Christmas

In the same way that governments the world over use tactics like inflation to squeeze the working class—lowering the exchange-value of your money without increasing your wages, tactics like shoplifting, “cheating” on bus and subway fares, “stealing” from bosses and merchants are isolated expressions of tendencies to go beyond the limits of a society where everything is based on money and market economy. These acts, in isolation, express the same kind of breakdown in the capitalist social relations that occurred in the “anti-commodity” riots in Watts, and in areas of other U.S. cities in the 1960's. During a massive power failure in New York City the night of July 13-14th, 1977, a huge, spontaneous “Black Christmas” of looting occurred. Widespread looting has often played a positive part in rebellions in Poland in 1970 and 1976, in Britain, Brazil and Egypt.